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J.Wolf. del. et lith.

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THE TIGER IN AMBUSH.

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MY INDIAN JOURNAL

BY

COLONEL WALTER CAMPBELL

AUTHOR OF THE 'OLD FOREST RANGER'

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PREFACE.

I HAVE read somewhere that any one who has seen a little of the world, and taken notes of what he has seen, need only publish these notes to produce an amusing, if not an instructive book.

In my first attempt at authorship, "The Old Forest Ranger," an unfledged bantling to which no respectable publisher could be found to stand godfather, and which I was therefore obliged to publish at my own risk, I had not the moral courage to act up strictly to this doctrine, but concocted, from the materials afforded by my journal, a work of fiction, —founded on fact, however,—which succeeded so well (having speedily gone through three editions), that I thought it advisable to "let well alone," and not tempt my fate further. And so I have rested on my oars ever since.

But having been strongly urged to "try it again," I have at length been persuaded to pull out the little travel-stained MS. volumes from the dusty book-shelf, where they have lain undisturbed for the last three decades, and to venture upon the perhaps rash experiment of trying whether the journal and notes of a subaltern of a marching regiment, in their crude state, can be digested by those who were good enough to take an interest in "The Old Forest Ranger."

I say in their crude state, because, being of opinion that too much cooking, like too many cooks, is apt to "spoil the broth," I have not attempted to improve the subaltern's style by too much skimming or spicing, and have therefore, with the exception of condensing a few long-winded paragraphs, and cutting out a little school-boy slang, ventured to present it as nearly as possible in its original form.

The descriptions of wild animals, and the different modes of hunting them, I have compiled from notes, taken from time to time, during my five years' residence in India.

While these sheets have been passing through the press, my old friend Walter Elliot of Wolfelee—the Elliot mentioned in the text—who was my preceptor in

Natural History and Indian Woodcraft—and a better sportsman or more zealous naturalist never shouldered rifle or handled scalpel—has been good enough to look over the proofs, and return them to me, with any remarks which occurred to him; and these remarks—which I consider a valuable addition to the work, as coming from the pen of so experienced a naturalist, and so good an Oriental linguist as Elliot is known to be—I have inserted as foot notes, with his initials attached, to distinguish them from my own notes.

The illustrations are by Noel Paton and Wolf.

Noel Paton's beautiful drawing of "Biaca," taken from my original pencil sketch—slightly idealized perhaps, the inevitable result of his magic pencil, but a good likeness—speaks for itself; and I think much credit is due to that talented artist Wolf, for having, with no other materials to work upon than my rough sketches, aided by my description, managed to produce such admirable portraits of the Sambar, Bison, and Ibex, three animals with which he was previously unacquainted, but which any Indian sportsman will at once recognise. The Tiger, being an old friend, he has treated as such, and, I think, done him ample justice.

A few of the earlier chapters of this book were published some twenty years ago in a London Magazine, but are, probably, ere now forgotten. The remainder is all new material from the old musty journals; and I can only hope that, like old wine, it may not prove the less palatable for being covered with cobwebs.

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CHAPTER I.

BOYHOOD.

Some one has said that man is a hunting animal. Whether this be true of the human race in general, I shall not venture to affirm. But this I can safely say, that I, at least, was born a hunting animal. From my earliest childhood I loved lethal weapons, I rejoiced in the smell of gunpowder, and well do I remember the almost religious veneration with which I used to regard a certain pair of red deer's antlers which hung in the entrance hall, and sigh for the day when I should be able to earn such trophies—I have earned many since, and the poor old head is now eclipsed by the more splendid spolia which surround it, but it still retains its place, and is still dear to me for the sake of early recollections.

Long before I had strength to carry a gun, I had learnt to despise such childish toys as brass cannon, and pocket pistols. My delight was to follow the keeper in his rambles over the moors, watching with boyish admiration what appeared to me his almost superhuman skill in bringing down birds on wing, and thinking myself amply repaid for the

hunger and fatigue I often endured, by an occasional shot at an old cock grouse, which by dint of stalking craftily, and resting the barrel of the gun over a hillock—for I was not yet strong enough to hold it to my shoulder—I frequently managed to slay. It would have done your heart good to have heard the shout of exultation, with which the bare-legged kilted young savage bounded from his hiding-place, as the convulsive flutter of wings, among the heather, announced that his shot had been successful—to have seen the tenacity, like that of a young wild cat, with which he clung to his prey, lest it might lose its identity by being mingled with the birds already in the game-bag—and to have witnessed the proud look of triumph with which he exhibited the scarlet crest, and glossy brown plumage of his victim, to the admiring group of younger brothers and sisters who welcomed his return from "the hill,"—to them a land of mist and mystery.

A Highland education naturally tended to foster this innate love of field sports; whilst my solitary rambles, for days and nights together, in pursuit of the wily stag, and the wild legends of bygone days,* with which my ears were filled by the venerable deer-stalkers and bards of our clan, inspired me with a love for the beauties of nature, a spirit of adventure, and a considerable dash of romance, which have clung to me ever since, and have proved a source of no little enjoyment during my service in India—a country which, to Europeans in general, is merely a land of banishment—but which to me proved a land of stirring adventure and pleasing romance, to which, in my old age, I can look back with feelings of un-

* Many of these, almost forgotten legends, have lately been rescued from oblivion by my cousin, Mr. Campbell of Islay; one of the few men of the present day capable of undertaking such a work.

alloyed satisfaction. But before starting for India, a word about my dear Highland home.

I was born heir to an old family property in the West Highlands of Scotland.

My father died when I was only seven years of age, leaving me, two brothers, and a sister, to the care of my mother—an Englishwoman by birth, but romantically attached to her adopted Highland home. In her younger days, she had lived much abroad, mixed in the best society, and had the courtly manner of a well-bred lady of the last century. But with all her courtly manner, my mother had a dash of the Spartan in her. Her theory was, that boys could not be brought up too hardy; that a man, worthy of the name of man, should not know what fear meant; and that, if not courteous to the fair sex, as knight-errant of romance, he was unworthy to live.

The consequence was, that my brothers and I lived—out of doors—the lives of young savages; wandering among the hills in search of hawks' nests, swimming across the river in our clothes (consisting merely of a kilt and flannel shirt), which we allowed to dry on our backs; riding unbroken Highland ponies, with nothing but a halter to guide them; and going to sea in open boats in all weathers. But, within doors, no savagery was allowed. In the drawing-room, we were expected to behave like well-bred pages, and tend the ladies as such; and so we were brought up hardy enough for anything, without sinking into utter barbarism.

But with regard to "book-learning," our education was not so good. During the six winter months, we attended the old High School in Edinburgh, and spent the summer in the Highlands studying, by way of, with a private tutor; who, being a Highlander, naturally sympathised with us in our preference for rifles, salmon-spears, and fishing-rods, over

Latin grammars, Greek lexicons, and the problems of Euclid. So it came to pass we learnt more of woodcraft than the classics; and on leaving Edinburgh to join the army, I was politely informed, by our venerable Rector, that I was quite right in choosing the profession of a soldier, as I was just the sort of fellow to make capital "food for powder," but would never be good for anything else. Many years after, when I had returned from India, a major in the army, I met my venerable preceptor, and after a long friendly chat, about old times, he was good enough to acknowledge that I had turned out better than he expected, and was glad to find I had not yet been "used up" as "food for powder."

There were plenty of salmon and deer in those days; and that noble bird the eagle, which has now become almost extinct, was then as common as hawks are now. I generally knew where to find an eagle's nest. I early became an expert hand at slaying salmon, either with rod or leister (for spearing salmon was then considered quite a legitimate sport). And when I had learnt to handle a rifle (which I did as soon as I was strong enough to hold one to my shoulder) I took to deer-stalking, under the guidance of old Alan M'Intyre, the fox-hunter and bard of our district. The old Highland fox-hunter has long ago been superseded by the modern game-keeper. Like the Red Indian, he has been overwhelmed by the tide of advancing civilization, and become almost extinct. But, in the days of my boyhood, when game-keepers were almost unknown, and hardly needed, the fox-hunter of a Highland district was a person of no small importance. He was paid so much a year by each proprietor, and wandered about from house to house, always a welcome guest, slaying eagles, foxes, wild cats, and other vermin, and receiving a certain gratuity

from each farmer for every fox or eagle he could produce. He managed also to lay up a stock of food for the winter, by spearing salmon, and slaying, as a "mart,"* a fat stag or two. And why not? Why should not he have a "mart" as well as his neighbours? He had neither flocks nor herds. For is not the deer of the "corrie," and the salmon of the river, the natural food of the hunter?

My friend Alan M'Intyre was a specimen of the thoroughbred old Highlander, rarely met with now-a-days. He was a tall, wiry, active-looking man of about fifty, with strikingly handsome features, and the grave expression and dignified but courteous manner of an American Indian chief. His bow, when saluting a lady, would have done credit to a courtier. Although he could neither read nor write, he had studied the great book of nature, and not in vain, for it had made him a naturalist and a poet. From the stag to the stoat, he was as familiar with the habits and instincts of the wild animals of the Highlands, as a shepherd is with the habits of his sheep, or the instincts of his collie-dog. And during his long solitary rambles among the hills, he beguiled the time by composing Gaelic songs, and poems worthy of Ossian. Many a pleasant evening have I spent in listening to them, as we sat over a peat fire in a lonely bothie, and rested our weary limbs, after a successful day's stalking.

It was a joyful day to us boys when Alan's well-known shrill whistle, which could be heard at a mile's distance, announced his arrival; for on such occasions we were always allowed a couple of days' holiday to join the hunt; and forth we rushed, with shouts of welcome, to meet him as he came striding up the avenue, followed by a pack of lean,

* An animal slaughtered about October or November, and salted down to supply the family with beef during the winter, is termed a "mart."

hungry-looking dogs, consisting of two superannuated fox-hounds, an old brindled deer-hound, a rough Russian water-dog, and about a dozen of thorough varmint-looking terriers, ready to tackle anything from a bull to a badger, and whose scarred muzzles and torn ears gave evidence of many a fierce encounter with wild-cat and otter. Under his arm, balanced horizontally, Alan carried a long-barrelled Spanish gun, which had been in his family for ages, and was supposed to have done good service at Culloden; and over his shoulder was thrown a well-worn gray plaid, one end of which was sewed up so as to form a sort of pocket, which he called his "blood-poke," and on searching which we seldom failed to find an otter, a fox, a pine-martin, or some other animal which he had picked up during his march across the hills.

Alan was my sporting tutor, and a rare good one he was. Powder and lead being expensive commodities in the Highlands, Alan could not afford to burn powder for nothing, and rarely did so. He picked his shots, and would stalk a stag for half a day rather than risk a wild shot; but when he did fire, his bullet seldom failed to reach the heart.

Alan's theory was that no man had any right to call himself a hunter till he had killed a stag, a seal, an eagle, and a swan, and did not consider my education finished till I succeeded in doing so; but, having done so, he sent me forth with his blessing, as a lad fit to take care of himself.

Many years after, when I returned from India, I found poor old Alan still alive, and, although upwards of seventy years of age, still creeping about with the old long-barrelled gun under his arm. It was really affecting to see the poor old man, with tears of joy pouring over his furrowed cheeks, as I displayed to him my Indian trophies of the chase, and

reminded him that but for his good training I should never have earned them. He patted me on the back, calling me the "calf of his heart," the pride of his old age, and would sit for hours gazing at the heads and skins which decorated the hall, as an old Indian chief might do upon the scalps taken in war by his only son, chaunting the while a song of triumph which he had composed on my return from "the far off hunting-grounds near the rising sun," where I had slain great *wild-cats*, larger and stronger than a Highland bull.

These were the days when the real "mountain-dew" trickled from our hills.

Every bushel of barley grown in the country was manufactured into whisky by the grower, and despite all the efforts of excisemen, and the crews of revenue cutters which blockaded the coast, small stills might be found at work in almost every hill-burn or mountain-stream, as our Southern friends would call them, and there was no lack of hardy, reckless boatmen, ready to ferry the "*water of life*" across to the low country, on stormy nights, when the blockading cutters did not care to keep at sea; and to land it by force, if necessary. I remember one case of a boat's crew landing on the pier at Greenock, fighting the excisemen—some of whom were thrown into the water—and carrying off their kegs of whisky in triumph.

There was an old woman in our village, named Kate Carmichael—there is no object in concealing her name now, for she has long ago been gathered to her ancestors—who made her living by distilling "the water of life," and looked upon our good old king, George the Third, who then ruled the land, much in the same light as a modern Pole looks upon the Emperor of Russia—a ruthless tyrant, who would not allow

honest people to manufacture their own grain after their own fashion, and devoutly prayed for his death accordingly.

At last the news of the old king's demise reached the Highlands, and Kate, rejoicing in the death of the tyrant, immediately set her still to work, in her own house, and in broad daylight. The natural consequence was an early visit from the exciseman, who claimed the still as a lawful prize.

Kate did not see this; so seizing a pitchfork, which lay ready to her hand, she drove him into a corner, and kept him at bay, while she shouted to her neighbours for assistance, exclaiming, "Kill his brains; stick the rascal. There's nae law noo; the king's deed!"

Her idea was, that the moment the king died, all law, as far as Highlanders were concerned, ceased; and her neighbours being pretty much of the same mind, the exciseman was thrashed within an inch of his life, and the still rescued.

CHAPTER II.

THE GOOD SHIP "RESOLUTE."

I JOINED the army at the age of seventeen ; and soon after I had obtained my lieutenancy, the regiment in which I served received orders to embark for India. This news fell like a thunderbolt on many. India was to them a land of hopeless banishment—a living grave—a blank in their existence—a land from whence, if they escaped an early death, they were to return with sallow cheeks, peevish tempers, and shattered constitutions. And such, alas, was the fate of many. But to my romantic imagination it appeared a land of promise—a land of sunshine and perfume—a land of princes, palaces, and pageants. All the gorgeous descriptions I had ever heard or read of eastern scenery, eastern warfare, eastern hunting, rose up before me like fairy visions. The sunny gardens—the gorgeous temples—the picturesque camp—the gloomy hill-fort—the stupendous mountains—the eternal forests—the charge of the wounded tiger, and "the gray boar's death of foam and blood"—filled my thoughts by day, and haunted my dreams by night. I looked back with contempt on the dull country quarters in which I had idly, or worse than idly, vegetated for the last few years, and looked forward with enthusiasm to the field of adventure, perhaps of glory, which was thus thrown open to me. The thoughts of parting with those I loved was the only drawback to my happiness. And a sad tug at the heart-strings it was, when it came to be realised. But this is too painful a subject to dwell upon.

It was on a bright sunny morning in the month of June 1830, that our regiment marched from Chatham to embark at Gravesend. Many a fervent prayer was breathed for our safety, many a bright eye was dimmed with moisture, as the band of brave young fellows, so few of whom were destined to revisit their fatherland, marched with proud step and flashing eye through the crowded streets, the band playing "The girls we leave behind us," and our silken banners, which had floated victorious over many a bloody field, rustling gaily in the summer breeze, as if rejoicing at the prospect of fresh glory. The open windows were crowded with fair faces, many of them bedewed with tears—handkerchiefs were waved—nosegays were showered upon us—and pretty taper arms were eagerly extended to crown our colours with wreaths of laurel. My heart was very full that day; and were it not for the pride I took in the gallant light company at whose head I marched, and the relief I experienced from joining in the hearty British cheers of my companions, I could have shed tears like a woman.

I must pass over in silence the distressing scenes that ever attend the embarkation of a regiment for foreign service. The weeping of women—the screaming of children—the blank look of despair with which some fond young creature sees her husband torn from her arms—her convulsive sobs as she strains her first-born babe to her throbbing bosom—and the wild shriek of agony with which, at last, she sinks upon the earth, helpless, deserted, broken-hearted. Many such scenes were we forced to witness, fair reader; but the description of them would be too harrowing to thy feelings. The tear of sympathy is already gathering in thy bright eye, and we are loath to dim its lustre.

Suffice it to say, that we embarked in admirable order,

and with the satisfaction of knowing that the poor deserted women had, at least, been provided with ample means for returning to their homes, either by Government, or by the generous assistance of their officers. Three hearty cheers were given, the anchors weighed, the topsails sheeted home, and the good ships, yielding to the influence of the summer breeze, glided slowly down the river, as if they quitted the shores of England with reluctance.

Every one who has sailed with troops, must remember the discomfort of the first few days on board ship—the decks lumbered with baggage—the ill-arranged and crowded cabins —the grumbling of soldiers—the swearing of sailors—and the weeping of women. But let this pass. Our voyage down the Channel, although as prosperous as fair wind and fine weather could make it, was sad enough. We were still within sight of land; and the white cliffs of Old England, although dwindled to a mere line on the horizon, reminded us too forcibly of the sad parting with those we loved best on earth, and whom we were leaving perhaps for ever. Three days' quiet sailing, however, carried us into blue water. The sea-girt horizon met our eyes on every side. There was no longer any loved object to cling to. The bitterness of parting was past. Our hearts rebounded with the elasticity of youth. And we looked forward with hope, some of us even with pleasure, to the unknown land which lay before us.

I kept a daily journal during the voyage; but this, although it proved an interesting document to my fond mother, would hardly be so to the general reader.

Suffice it therefore, that on the 17th of June (having sailed on the 7th) we passed the beautiful island of Madeira; and on the 5th of July crossed the equator in longitude 24° 20′ W. Here we were boarded by Father Neptune, and

underwent the usual ceremony of shaving. To thee, sagacious reader, the particulars of this marine saturnalia must be familiar, but for the sake of the younger members of the family, to whom it may prove amusing, if thou art kind enough to read it aloud, I shall transcribe the description of the ceremony as I find it in my journal.

"*July 4th.*—Latitude 1° 5′ N., longitude 23° 30′ W. Wind S.W. fresh breezes. At 8 P.M. the man on the look out reported a light on the lee bow, and in a few minutes we were hailed by a hoarse unearthly voice which appeared to come from the water. 'Ship ahoi!' 'Ay! ay!' 'Back your mizzen topsail and let me come alongside.' 'Who are you?' 'Neptune;' replied the voice.

"'Neptune wishes to come alongside, sir,' said the officer of the watch, stepping up to the Captain and touching his hat.

"'Very good, sir,' replied the Captain; 'back your mizzen topsail and let him come.'

"'Ay! ay! sir; aft here, you After guard.' The mizzen topsail was laid a-back, so as to retard the progress of the ship, and Neptune, still speaking from the water, thanked the Captain for his politeness. After asking the name of the ship, where from, and whither bound, he of the unearthly voice informed us that he would honour us with a visit next morning, to give such of his children as had not before passed through his dominions, an opportunity of being introduced. He then wished us good night. His royal car—a tar bucket on fire—was shoved off, amidst a discharge of rockets and blue lights, and was seen blazing in our wake, as it danced over the waves, for nearly an hour afterwards.

"*July 5th.*—Wind S.E.—steady trade—fine clear weather. At 10 A.M., being then exactly on the equator, we were again

hailed by Father Neptune, who, before coming on board, sent two of his constables to clear the decks, and to demand a list of those who were to have the honour of being introduced to his majesty.

"To describe the appearance of these monsters, with their hideous masks, oakum wigs, and uncouth gestures, is beyond the power of words. They were perfectly naked, with the exception of a fringe of canvas painted green, which was fastened round their loins; and their bare skin, smeared with ochre, was spotted over with tar, in imitation of a leopard. In short, they gave one more the idea of a cross between the devil and a mermaid, than anything else I can think of. To us youngsters, who were shortly to be delivered into their hands, there appeared something satanic in their wild gambols, and the deep hollow voice which issued from beneath the mask sounded awfully fiendish.

"All being arranged, a curtain which divided the quarter-deck from the waist, was slowly raised; the band, stationed on the poop, struck up, 'See the conquering hero comes,' and Neptune, seated on his car, with the fair Amphitrite by his side, and attended by his staff, moved majestically forward.

"The car was drawn by six marine monsters remarkably well got up, and on each side of it marched the doctor and the barber. The former, dressed in an old uniform coat and a gigantic cocked hat, carried in his hand a lancet about a foot long, and under his arm a box of boluses, quite as large as pistol bullets, and formed of very unsavoury ingredients. The latter bore in one hand his shaving brush, quite as large in proportion as the doctor's lancet, and on his shoulder he supported that awful implement of torture his razor, one blade of which had a smooth edge, whilst the other was notched like a saw. A gigantic negro, who acted as

footman, stood on the back of the car, bearing the trident with a fish stuck upon the prongs. Two nondescript animals enveloped in sheep-skins, and which, from their growling, we supposed to be intended for polar bears, followed the car on all fours, and a host of tritons brought up the rear. The gentle Amphitrite, dressed in an old bonnet and shawl, sat with downcast eyes, twirling her thumbs and trying to look interesting; but her weather-beaten face, and a huge black beard which occasionally peeped from under her muffler, gave her rather an unladylike appearance.

"The first mate, hat in hand, advanced to meet the procession, and many civil things passed between him and Neptune. His majesty was graciously pleased to inquire after the captain and officers of the ship,—hoped we had enjoyed a pleasant voyage,—and promised us a fair wind as far as the outskirts of his dominions. The mate hoped that Lady Neptune was quite well, and was informed that she was rather in a delicate state of health; she had, only the week before, presented her lord and master with a fine litter of *six* little Neptunes, and having had a long drive that morning, she felt as if a glass of rum would do her good. A bottle was accordingly produced, and a glass of rum served out to each member of his majesty's suite, not excepting the bears, who being unable to use their paws had the liquor poured down their throats.

"These preliminaries having been arranged, Neptune's secretary was called forward, and desired to read aloud a list of those who were to undergo the operation of shaving, and the victims were ordered below, there to remain till called for. When my turn came, I was seized by the two fiendish-looking functionaries before mentioned, who blindfolded my eyes, and seizing me by the arms, dragged me on deck. Here I

was saluted by buckets of water, which were dashed over me on all sides, whilst the fire-engine played in my face with such cruel precision that I was more than half drowned. Coughing and spluttering, and gasping for breath, I was marched slowly across the deck, forced to mount a ladder, and seated on a plank, with Neptune on one side and the barber on the other, whilst the doctor stood below with his lancet and box of nostrums ready to administer to those who required his aid.

"The ceremony commenced by Neptune asking me, through a speaking-trumpet applied close to my ear, 'How old I was'—'Why I had come to sea'—'Whether I had previously crossed the line,' etc.; and each time I attempted to answer, having the enormous shaving-brush, covered with lather, stuffed half way down my throat. Declining to answer only made matters worse; for the doctor was immediately called upon to restore my power of speech. This he dexterously accomplished by digging his lancet into my foot, and completed the cure by cramming one of his abominable boluses into my mouth. My face was now copiously lathered and scraped, and my legs being tilted up, I fell backwards into a sail filled with water to the depth of three or four feet. Blindfolded as I was, I fancied myself overboard, and struck out for my life. But my miseries were not yet ended. I was startled by a hoarse roar, and the two bears, who had been lying in wait for their victim, seizing me in their tarry paws, ducked my head under water, and bundled me about till I verily thought I should be drowned. At last I managed to tear the bandage from my eyes, upset one of the bears, and, jumping on his prostrate body, succeeded in making my escape. Being now one of the initiated, I was provided with a fire-bucket, and allowed to amuse myself by ducking the

unfortunates who succeeded me. All having undergone the ordeal of shaving, bleeding, physicking, and drowning, another glass of rum was served out, Neptune drove off to the sound of martial music, and the remainder of the day was given up to dancing and sky-larking."

For some days after crossing the line we were becalmed, and amused ourselves, as is usual on such occasions, by catching sharks, exercising the men at the guns, admiring the glories of tropical sunsets, dancing on deck, and making love by moonlight.

Talking of love and moonlight, it often makes me smile when I look back upon some of the romantic effusions of my youth. Here is a specimen taken from my log, and evidently penned by a love-sick boy, as I then was, for I had left my heart in England.

"We were becalmed to-night directly on the line, with the moon at full, and a more lovely night I never beheld. The stillness of a tropical night is at all times imposing, and calculated to inspire that dreamy, melancholy, yet pleasing frame of mind in which I love so well to indulge. But at sea—in the midst of the trackless ocean—with the glorious moon sailing through the deep blue, cloudless sky;—when the tall ship, like a wearied swan, folds her snowy pinions, and slumbers on the heaving bosom of the deep—when the spirit of the storm is hushed, and the troubled elements at rest;—on such a night as this, the silence of nature is felt to be sublime—almost awful—and yet there is a soothing influence in all around, a sweetness, a gentleness, an indescribable something which fills the heart with thoughts of her we love.

"This was just such a night—I felt its influence in the fullest extent—and I betook myself to my favourite perch in

the main top, to enjoy undisturbed the luxury of my own thoughts, for I was not in the mood to hold converse with the children of earth. 'The rebellious spirit of the waters slumbered,' and the full moon, shedding a flood of light over the glassy waves, reminded me of Byron's beautiful lines :—

'The waves lie still and gleaming,
And the lulled winds are dreaming,
And the midnight moon is weaving
Her bright chain o'er the deep,
Whose breast is gently heaving
As an infant's asleep.'

"Our gallant ship, with her ample drapery of snowy canvas, hanging in graceful festoons from her long tapering spars, bowed her proud head, as she gently rose and fell on the long regular swell of the ocean, whilst the sails flapped lazily against the masts, with a pensive melancholy sound, as if in her dreams she were sighing over the inconstancy of the fickle wind—so have I seen a high-spirited maiden weep in secret over the broken vows of a faithless lover, whilst before the world she bears herself with more than wonted dignity, hiding the amiable weakness of a woman's heart under the outward cloak of cold indifference.

"Beneath my feet the watch lay scattered in picturesque groups over the moonlit decks. The drowsy helmsman hung listless athwart the powerless wheel, now casting an upward glance at the sluggish sails, and whistling to invoke the breeze, and again relapsing into a dreamy reverie, thinking perhaps of the parting tears of his absent sweetheart. The officer of the watch, who with quick impatient step paced to and fro across the poop, appeared to be the only living thing in the whole of that vast floating fabric. One might have fancied that the angel of death had spread his wings over us, so hushed was

every human sound—and yet what hopes, what fears, what dreams of love, and home, and happiness were there! Vain hopes! vain fears! vain dreams! which, unless the protecting hand of the Almighty be stretched over us, may, ere to-morrow's sun, be swept into eternity on the wings of the hurricane."

But enough of the sentimental. Permit me just to catch this shark, which is alongside, for the amusement of those fine boys of yours, and then, gentle reader, I shall waft thee to the spicy shores of Ind, with the speed of thought.

Come here, boys—Do you see these two black things, like the blade of a shoemaker's knife, moving along slowly on the surface of the water? Well, these are the back and tail fins of a shark, and you may see by the distance between them that he is of goodly size.—Now they have disappeared. He has gone down, but will soon be up again; he will not leave us till he gets something to eat, if we remain here for days. See! there he comes shooting up from the blue depths of ocean, like a huge bar of silver; and now that he is close under the counter, you can see him distinctly through the transparent water. He is, as I thought, a shark of unusual size; nearly fifteen feet long, I should say: but we shall have a better opportunity of judging presently when we have got him on board. Mark the malignant glance of his green eye, as he rolls it upwards, glaring upon us with cannibal looks, and thinking in his own mind, what a nice tender morsel one of you young gentlemen would make, if you just happened accidentally to tumble overboard.

Hullo, youngster! mind what you are about there, and don't be climbing over the tafferel, else he is likely to have his longing gratified.

Do you observe these two beautiful little fish, striped with green and purple and gold, like living rainbows—see

how close they swim in front of the shark's nose, and how exactly they retain their position, as if they were attached to it by invisible strings, and drew the huge monster after them in spite of himself. These are the pilot fish of which you have no doubt often heard. They are said to go in front of the shark for the purpose of guiding him to his prey. But I rather suspect they accompany him, as the jackal accompanies the lion, to feed upon the scraps of food which escape his more powerful jaws. However, whatever their object may be, they certainly appear to have a strong attachment to their voracious friend, and after the shark is taken, will linger round the ship for many hours, seeking about anxiously, as if in distress at the loss of their companion.

But come, boys, we have seen enough of him in the water, and now let us try if we cannot induce him to come on board.

We shall do the civil thing, and drop him *a line of invitation*, at all events. Here, you see, is my hook—somewhat of the largest, you think, but not a bit too large for our purpose, although it is fully as thick as a man's finger, and the fathom of chain which is attached to it, strong enough to hold a bull. Now we bend it on to one end of this rope, the other end of which is made fast on board, to prevent his running away with it—and now, if we had a bait, we are ready for him. Here, you smart little fellow with the curly head, just jump forward and ask the ship's steward for a piece of pork out of the barrel.

That will do famously. Now, you see, we fix it on the hook, thus, and throw it overboard with a splash, to attract his attention. There, he sees it, and comes at it like a bulldog—he is very hungry, and has gorged it at once—there now, he is well hooked, hold on, and mind he does not pull

some of you overboard. Ay, plunge away, old boy; that hook ought to hold you, strong as you are.

No!—by all that's unlucky, he's off! See, he has bent the hook like a piece of wire, and shaken himself clear, although it was fixed in his maw, and has come away with a large portion of it sticking to the barb.

This, one would think, is enough to give him a disgust to pork for some time to come. But your shark, when hungry, is not easily put off his feed. I see he is still prowling about, so let us bend on a fresh hook, and try him again.

Ha! he is rather shy of it this time; he swims round and round, smelling and nibbling, but is afraid to bolt it. Pull it away—do not let him play with it. There! see how angry he gets—see how he dashes about, in search of the tempting morsel which has been snatched from him. Now he is savage enough to go at anything—let him have it again. He pounces upon it without hesitation, and makes off. Give him line!—give him line! let him gorge it. Now then, check him with a hearty tug—well done! it is through his jaw this time, and we have him safe enough if there be virtue in hemp and iron. Clap on here, all of you—take a turn round this belaying pin. Heavens and earth, what a rush!—Give him line, boys; he is as strong as a whale, and must have his fling at first. Now then, check him—gently now, coax him along; see what a spring he makes, and how furiously he lashes the water with his tail! Now he turns on his side; haul his head above water, and hold on, till I get this bowline hitch over his head. There! it's all fast; and now, sir—as old Isaac Walton says—"he is your own."—Aft here, some of you idlers, and pass him along to the gangway. Hook on the tackle—hurra! and hoist away. Bear a hand with that hatchet, one of you, else he'll break some of our

legs. — Well struck! another chop — and the formidable monster, paralysed by the loss of his tail, lies gasping on the deck perfectly at the mercy of his captors.

And now, my dear boys, having given you a lesson in shark-fishing, I must refer you, for further information, to the black cook, who will gladly instruct you as to the most approved method of preparing his tail for the captain's table.

On the 13th July, lat. 20° 25′ S., long. 29° 20′ W., we passed the uninhabited island of Trinidada, the only land, besides Madeira, which we saw during the voyage.

On the 16th of August, after having doubled the Cape, we encountered a heavy squall, which, during the time it lasted, almost amounted to a hurricane, and which I think worthy of being recorded, on account of the peculiar circumstances which attended it.

The day on which the gale occurred happened to be Sunday. We were dead becalmed. The albatros, instead of wheeling round us as usual, floated like swans on the glassy surface of the ocean.* The sails hung lazily against the masts; and our gallant ship, after having fought her way bravely round "the Cape of Storms," appeared to be enjoying the seventh day of rest, in common with all nature. Divine service was performed, as usual, under an awning of flags, and the whole of the crew, with the exception of the officer of the watch and the man at the wheel, attended in their best Sunday clothes, almost every man having a prayer-book, and all appearing much impressed by the solemnity of the service.

And here I may remark, that whatever sailors may be on shore, I have always observed with pleasure, that at sea, at least, they appear to feel a deep respect for religious ordin-

* The only instance in which I ever saw an albatros settle on the water.

ances. Who, indeed, that believes in the existence of an Almighty Being would not?

I do not know a more impressive ceremony, or one better calculated to inspire one with serious thoughts, than that of divine service performed at sea.

The solemn silence which reigns throughout the ship, unbroken save by the gentle lapping of the water against her massive sides; the weather-beaten captain standing with reverent air at the capstan-head, which, covered by the meteor flag of Old England, serves for his reading-desk; the little group of sincere worshippers, who, perhaps, only twelve hours before, were struggling against the fury of the elements with the characteristic energy and indomitable courage of British seamen, now assembled to offer up their humble petitions, and return thanks to their Creator in the midst of the trackless ocean; the beautiful language of the prayers appointed to be read at sea, and the blessed assurance that our feeble voices are heard, although ascending from a mere speck in the ocean, many hundred miles removed from the habitations of our fellow-men;—all tend to inspire feelings of devotion, to impress us with a conviction of our own insignificance, our utter dependence on the goodness of our Creator, "the eternal Lord God, who alone spreadest out the heavens, and rulest the raging of the sea." And the heart of the most thoughtless is filled with gratitude towards Him without whose aid vain indeed were the feeble efforts of man to contend against the spirit of the tempest.

Divine service had been performed, and we were all lounging about upon the poop—some impatient spirits grumbling at the delay occasioned by the calm, and making absurd bets as to the probable time of our arrival at Madras; others, with more philosophy, smoking their cheroots in silent enjoyment

of the peaceful scene, or watching the sportive gambols of a dolphin which glided round the ship, sparkling in all the pride of green, and purple, and gold ; whilst the officer of the watch paced slowly up and down, now casting his eyes aloft, in hopes that some passing current of air might fill the light duck of the skysails, and now whistling as though to awake the sleeping breeze.

Some one having remarked this circumstance, the conversation naturally turned upon the superstitions of seamen ; and one of our party, a wild young ensign of the name of C——, proposed that we should try the experiment of procuring a breeze by sticking a knife in the mast.*

"What are you at there, young gentleman?" cried the chief mate, a venerable old seaman, and a firm believer in all nautical superstitions, as C—— opened a large clasp knife, and drove it with all his strength into the mizzen-mast, leaving it sticking in the wood.

"Only conjuring up a breeze, old boy," replied C——, laughing. "I am sure you want one."

"May be, may be," replied the mate, resuming his walk with rather a dogged air ; "but mind that you do not get more wind than you bargain for, young gentleman. I have seen that trick played before now, and no good came of it, I can tell you."

At this moment the dressing bugle sounded, and the youngsters rushed to their cabins to prepare for dinner, laughing immoderately at the solemn visage of the worthy mate.

"I wish I had the keel-hauling of some of these d—d

* Sailors believe that sticking a knife in the mast is an infallible receipt for procuring a breeze, but that the incantation is too powerful to be rashly employed, as it generally produces a severe gale.

skylarking young scamps," muttered the old quartermaster, who, standing at the wheel, had been a very unwilling spectator of young C——'s incantation, although in the presence of his officer he did not venture to interfere. "Mr. M—— may well say that no good ever comes of such tricks. We have good reason to remember the last time one of these boiled lobsters brought us a breeze, when the ship was on her beam-ends, and poor Tom Bunt washed overboard. And all along of the monkey tricks of them d—d sodger officers. Ay, by the Lord Harry! we had the devil to pay that night, and no pitch hot; and so we'll have it again before long, else my name is not Jack. But what signifies argufying? It's always the same, with any of them cattle on board. I'm blowed, if a man might n't as well look for the Lord's prayer in a Guineaman's log-book, as expect to find common sense in the head of a sodger. And so there's an end on't."

I had the middle watch that night — for we "sodger officers" were obliged to keep watch as regularly as the officers of the ship—and accordingly retired early to my berth; but, before doing so, I went on deck to see how the weather looked. It was still as calm as ever, but the night was very dark; a swell was getting up, and I could see from the anxious looks of the men who stood clustered in groups in the waist and at the gangways, that they expected a dirty night. I could also gather, from the few words which reached my ears, that my friend C—— and his incantation formed the subject of their conversation.

At twelve o'clock I was roused from a comfortable nap by the shrill pipe of the boatswain, and a hoarse voice bawling down the hatchway, "Larboard watch, ahoy! All hands reef topsails!" which, together with the uneasy motion of the ship, proved that a change had taken place in the weather. Next

moment the unwelcome apparition of a dripping, shivering middy, stood in the doorway of my cabin, cap in hand.

"Eight bells, if you please, sir."

"Very good, Master Peter. What sort of a night is it?"

"Very dirty to windward, sir—breeze freshening—sea getting up—heavy rain—every appearance of a squally night, sir," —and with this Job's comfort middy made his bow and exit.

"Remarkably pleasant," thought I, as I jumped out of my comfortable cot, and huddled on a thick pea-jacket and pair of Flushing trousers.

When I got on deck, I found the night darker than ever. There was a thick drizzling rain—the sea had got up in an extraordinary manner—and the ship, under double-reefed topsails, with top-gallant sails over them, was rolling along at the rate of eleven knots, with a fresh breeze on her quarter; the royal yards were on deck, and all appeared to be made snug for the night.

Having mustered my watch, I ascended the poop ladder, and found the second mate, who had been relieved from his watch, taking a parting glance, to see that all was right, before leaving the deck. The wind groaned and whistled through the straining cordage, and the rain beat in my face, so as almost to blind me, as I looked out to windward and attempted to pierce the deep gloom which brooded over sea and sky.

"What sort of a night are we likely to have?" said I, addressing the second mate.

"Not very settled, sir, from the appearance of the sky," he replied in an abstracted manner. "Rather squally or so—eh? A small pull of that weather main topsail brace! So! Belay every inch of that! Now that's something shipshape—eh? Mr. Peter"—addressing the little dripping middy

before mentioned, who, buttoned up in a huge pea-jacket, large enough to hold three of him, looked very much like a young bear—"just run down to the cabin and see how the barometer stands."

"A little down since it was last set, sir," reported Master Peter, returning on deck and touching his hat.

"The devil it is—eh! Smart fellow you, Master Peter. Are all the ropes clear, and ready for running?"

"Yes, sir,—saw them all clear myself."

"Eh! you did, did you?—that's right!—smart fellow, Master Peter. Never trust to another. Always see things done yourself. That's ship-shape—eh! Well, go below now, and turn in. But stay—go to my cabin first, and get a glass of grog, for you are wet to the skin, you poor little imp, and must want something to warm you."

Peter made a grateful duck of acknowledgment for the mate's kind offer, and disappeared down the hatchway.

"And now, gentlemen," continued the second mate, "I shall wish you good-night and a pleasant watch. Your orders," addressing the third mate, who had relieved him, "are to carry on as long as you can, to keep a good look-out, and to call the captain and first mate, if any particular change takes place in the weather. You need not trouble yourself about me, unless you want to reef. Good-night, gentlemen." So saying, and humming a tune, No. 2 dived below.

During the first hour of my watch no change took place in the weather; but about two bells (or one o'clock in the morning) the dark gloomy haze which had hung so long to windward gradually rose till it had attained a certain height, where it hung like a huge black curtain, a lurid mysterious light extending from its lower edge to the horizon, and showing the foaming crests of the waves, as they rushed along

tumultuously in our wake, roaring and hissing in their vain attempts to overtake the bounding ship ; the rain suddenly ceased, and the breeze freshened rapidly, coming in strong fitful puffs.

"I don't much like the look of the night, sir," said the gunner, approaching the officer of the watch, and touching his hat respectfully.

"Neither do I," replied the mate. "There's a fresh hand at the bellows, and we'll catch it before long, I suspect."

"I beg your pardon, sir, for offering an opinion," said the gunner modestly, after taking a turn or two across the deck, "but that main top-gallant mast is complaining a good deal, sir ; shall we settle down the top-gallant halyards a bit to ease it ?"

"Ay," replied the mate, looking aloft and smiling, "it's grinning a little, but it's a good stick, and my orders are to carry on till all's blue—so we'll let it grin a little longer ; there are plenty of spare spars on board."

But the breeze now freshened so rapidly that the dashing mate was obliged to furl his top-gallant sails ; and in another hour, in spite of his inclination to "carry on," he began to think seriously of taking another reef in the topsails. He was just about to issue orders to this effect, when the wind suddenly lulled as if by magic. The black cloud again descended to the horizon, rendering the darkness more intense than ever. It fell stark calm, and the ship, having no longer steerage way, reeled and staggered like a drunkard, threatening at every lurch to roll the masts over the side, and making the wet sails flap and thrash about with a noise like thunder. I found it impossible to keep my feet, and was obliged to hold on by the mizzen rigging.

"This is strange weather," said I, addressing the mate.

"You may say that, sir. I have been expecting Mr. C——'s breeze all night, and we are going to have it now with a vengeance. Here, youngster," addressing a midshipman, "call the captain and first mate, and desire the boatswain to pipe all hands, reef topsails."

The first mate, who, like a good seaman, always slept in his clothes in such unsettled weather, was on deck in an instant, and his experienced eye at once detected that mischief was brewing.

"Shall I reef the main topsail, sir?" asked the officer of the watch.

"Yes sir, yes!" replied the first mate hurriedly. "Away aloft there, men, main topsail yard."

The gunner was already in the top, and a few hands besides the topmen. But just as the words left the mouth of the chief mate, a flash of forked lightning, far exceeding in intensity anything I have witnessed before or since, burst from the black cloud over head, lighting up the wild scene with a ghastly blue light, and glaring fearfully on the anxious faces and dripping forms of the crew. Another and another followed in rapid succession, and the thunder bellowed as if the whole firmament were being rent to pieces.

"Lie down there in the tops!—Off the yards, men!—Stop where you are, you on deck!" roared the chief mate, as the men were swarming up the rigging like bees.

At this moment I looked out over the gangway. The rain had suddenly ceased, the dark cloud lifted a little, and a line of bright phosphoric light appeared to fringe the horizon; at the same moment a low moaning sound, gradually increasing to a fearful hissing noise was heard.

"Port!" roared the captain, who at this moment rushed on deck half dressed, and who, bewildered by the darkness

and confusion, did not appear to know exactly what he was about.

"Starboard your helm! hard a starboard!" shouted the first mate, in a clear manly voice that was heard above everything.

This was no time for etiquette. The man at the wheel hesitated for a single moment, and then obeyed the latter order. It was well for us he did so. The low hissing sound increased to a terrific roar, and a thick mist drove full in our faces. It was not rain, but salt spray. Before I had time to remark anything further, the tempest had burst upon the ship in all its fury. The wind had flown round in an instant from N.W. to S.S.E., and struck us with a violence that baffles all description. Had it not been for the quick eye and presence of mind of the first mate, the ship must have been thrown on her beam-ends, and would probably have been dismasted. As it was, she careened for an instant, and then, being right before it, flew through the boiling sea with a velocity that was fearful to behold.

A terrific crash, followed by wild shrieks from the after cabins, was now heard. The cross-jack yard had snapped in the slings, and the unfortunate lady passengers, thinking, no doubt, from the tremendous noise over head, that the ship had struck, rushed wildly from their cabins in their night dresses, and were speedily joined by the gentlemen from below, in a similar state of dishabile. It was a scene which at any other time would have made one laugh, but other thoughts were uppermost at that moment. The work of destruction once begun went on rapidly; sail after sail was split and torn to ribbons, and in a few minutes the unfortunate ship was flying along under bare poles—a dismantled wreck. The noise of the splitting canvas, the splintering of wood, the furious

clanging of the chain sheets as they banged about and thrashed against the masts, the dismal howling of the wind, the shouts of the men and screams of the women, formed the most terrific concert I ever heard; whilst the fireballs which played about the mast-heads and the yard-arms, lighted up the wild scene with a ghastly blue that rendered it perfectly awful.

The only man in the ship who appeared thoroughly at his ease in the midst of the hubbub was the second mate. He was quite in his element, and bustled about, laughing and joking, as if the whole thing had been got up for his special amusement.

"Why," said he, laughing, as he picked up a large splinter of wood which had been hurled from the poop with great violence; "one might as well be in action at once; here are splinters and chain shot," alluding to the chain sheets which were banging about unpleasantly near our heads; "and all the other delights of a naval engagement. And some work for the doctor too," he continued, as an apparently lifeless body was carried past him between two of the men. But his levity gave way to better feelings, when he discovered the sufferer to be his favourite middy little Peter. The poor little fellow had been struck by a splinter, and his head was so fearfully mangled that we supposed him dead. But the kind-hearted reader will be glad to know that he eventually recovered.

The squall, although so furious during the time it lasted, blew over in less than a quarter of an hour, when it again fell stark calm. But the sea, which had hitherto been kept down by the extreme fury of the blast, now got up so suddenly, and in so frightfully agitated a manner, that nothing could be done towards repairing damages; and for the

remainder of that night we continued in about as uncomfortable a plight as can well be imagined.

The whole odium of the affair, of course, fell upon poor C——, who from that time forth was looked upon as a perfect Jonah, by the ship's crew in general, and the old quartermaster in particular. So much for catching the tail of a hurricane.

During the height of the gale our colonel's wife gave birth to a fine boy, and, notwithstanding the unfavourable circumstances under which the event took place, all went well. The lady made a rapid recovery; and the young gentleman, on whom we have, in the mean time, bestowed the name of "Grampus," is thriving.

On the 12th of September, we made the land near the southernmost point of the island of Ceylon. But making land after so long a voyage deserves a fresh chapter.

CHAPTER III.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

"Land! Land!"—What a thrilling cry is this at sea!—How that simple word makes the heart bound!—What a world of thought is embodied in it!—love, hope, fear, pride, boundless gratitude, or blank despair, may each, in turn, be called forth. The white cliffs of England; the sunny shores of India; the newly discovered island; the friendly haven; the rocky lee shore from which the reeling ship wildly, but vainly, struggles to escape, are all proclaimed by the single electrifying word—"land!"—yet how different, under these various circumstances, are the ideas connected with it!——

Some such thoughts as these flashed across my mind, as, at daylight on the morning of the 12th of September, after having paced the deck through two long dark hours of the morning watch, a voice from the clouds proclaimed the glad tidings,—

"Land right ahead!"

I bounded to the forecastle, and, in a few seconds, was by the side of the look-out man, on the fore-top-gallant cross-trees.

The only thing to be seen was an indistinct blue line on the horizon, which, to the eye of a landsman, appeared a mere cloud, that must speedily vanish before the rising sun. But even this was sufficient to set busy fancy at work.

Faint as that line appeared, it was still land!—And what

land?—"the land of the sun"—the land of adventure and romance, which, for the last three months, had filled my thoughts by day, and haunted my dreams by night—the great stage on which Clive, and Hastings, and Wellesley, and a hundred others had played their part, and earned the wreath of victory—a land of civilized idolaters—a land of palm trees and myrtle, of gloomy forests and parched deserts—a land of sunshine and perfume, yet teeming with pestilence and death.

Hyder Ali, Tippoo Sultan, and all the scenes of warfare, imprisonment, tyranny, and death, associated with their names—the chase of the wild-boar over the stony plains of the Deccan—tiger-haunted jungles, and sunny meads dotted with countless herds of the bounding antelope—the turbaned warriors and dark-eyed beauties of the East;—these and a thousand other glowing visions were conjured up by that faint blue line on the horizon.

The breeze freshened as the sun rose; and our good ship—like an impatient steed, who, after a long and toilsome march, suddenly comes in sight of the well-known halting-place—bounded gaily over the bright blue waves, trembling as if with eagerness, and snorting proudly, as she tossed the spray in sparkling rainbows from her bow.

As we neared the land, the faint outline of hills became each moment more distinct, till it gradually resolved itself into the beautiful scenery of the eastern coast of Ceylon. First appeared the bold outline of Adam's Peak, towering six thousand feet above the level of the sea; then the lower mountains, clothed to their summits with noble forest trees; and now the white coral beach, fringed with palm trees, and backed by a dense jungle of feathery bamboo, rises from the ocean to complete the foreground of this glorious picture.

By noon we were within four or five miles of the land, and the breeze having gradually died away, almost to a calm, we coasted along slowly, admiring the lovely scenery to our hearts' content.

From sunrise till sunset I lay upon deck, or in the main-top, with my telescope to my eye; now admiring the graceful forms of the native canoes, which, although there was hardly air enough to move the dog-vane, glided over the smooth surface of the sheltered bays with the swiftness of sea-birds, their snow-white sails contrasting beautifully with the dark green foliage which grew down to the water's edge; and now peering into the shady recesses of the jungle, till my heated imagination transformed every dark mass of rock into the figure of a stately elephant, and each tuft of withered herbage into the brindled skin of a tiger. I felt that now, indeed, a new and a glorious world was opened to me. The innate love of hunting, which had slumbered within me for months, burst into flame at the sight of those noble forests; and my heart yearned, with an indescribable longing, to explore their inmost recesses. I have, since then, taken the scalp of many a wild beast; but neither old age, nor the blood of a hecatomb of tigers, has served to quench the flame that was that day kindled on the beautiful coast of Ceylon.

Although it was three months and a half since we had left England, during which we had traversed some 15,000 miles of ocean, so little had occurred to mark the lapse of time, that it appeared to me as if I had been transported hither in my sleep, and suddenly dropped upon the coast of some fairy land. My recollections of England were still fresh and unchanged. Hitherto all around me had been English; and were it not for the gradual change of climate, an occasional shoal of flying-fish, the capture of a shark or two, and the

appearance of a few tropical sea-birds, nothing had occurred to remind us that we had not, all the time, been cruising up and down the British Channel. But here, at last, were all my glowing visions realized. Here was a land of beauty which even exceeded my most sanguine expectations; and my heart warmed as I fancied what an Indian hunter's life must be, amidst such scenery, and under such a sky.

By two o'clock in the day we were dead becalmed; the clouds began to settle down upon the mountains, the air became oppressively hot and sultry, and the sky assumed so threatening an aspect, that the captain considered it necessary to shorten sail, and make all the usual preparations for encountering a tropical squall. These precautions fortunately proved unnecessary, as the thunderstorm did not extend to us, and we had therefore a fine opportunity of watching its progress.

It was grand to watch the forked lightning playing round the rocky summit of Adam's Peak—to hear the thunder bellowing among the hills, and to mark the sudden change in the landscape, as the streams, swoln into torrents by the immense quantity of rain that had fallen, came rushing down the sides of the mountains in cataracts of muddy water.

The thunder-cloud having discharged its contents upon the island, the atmosphere suddenly cleared up, the air became cool and refreshing, and the sun went down in one of those gorgeous skies which cannot be described, and can hardly be conceived, except by one who has witnessed a tropical sunset at sea.

I remained on deck till near midnight, revelling in the rich perfume of spicy shrubs which was wafted to us by the gentle land-wind, and watching, with intense interest, the fires and moving lights which glowed or twinkled on the beach.

By whom were these fires lighted, and for what purpose? Who bore these lights? Might not this be the funeral pile of some self-immolating widow? That, the sacred lamp which some antelope-eyed maid was about to launch on the smooth surface of the summer sea, whilst she breathed a prayer to Vishnoo for the safe return of her absent lover? Yes! I was no longer in a Christian land—that beauteous coast was inhabited by the worshippers of idols—such things might be—it was possible—it was probable—nay, it must be so! My imagination ran riot. And when, at length, I retired to rest, it was only to conjure up still wilder fancies in my dreams.

For two days we remained nearly becalmed, drifting slowly along the coast, and on the 16th of September, about midnight, made the lights of Madras, when we lay off and on, under easy sail, till daylight.

September 17th.—I was, of course, on deck before daylight this morning. Just as the first streak of dawn appeared in the east, a bright flash shot from the frowning bastions of Fort St. George, and the sound of the morning gun came booming over the waters. The head-sails were braced round. The ship which had been lying to, as if asleep, gradually gathered way, and we stood in to the anchorage with a light air of wind.

The coast in the neighbourhood of Madras is flat and uninteresting, presenting merely a white line of sandy beach, fringed with cocoa-nut trees, which, at a little distance, appear to grow out of the water. But the numbers of native craft which crowded the anchorage, and the mosquito fleet of 'Catamarans' and fishing boats which swarmed round the ship, offering for sale a variety of strange-looking fish, and, to us, unknown fruits, afforded ample subjects of interest to those who had not before visited India.

Of all the extraordinary craft which the ingenuity of man has ever invented, a Madras 'Catamaran' is the most extraordinary, the most simple, and yet, in proper hands, the most efficient. It is merely three rough logs of wood, firmly lashed together with ropes formed from the inner bark of the cocoanut tree. Upon this, one, two, or three men—according to the size of the 'Catamaran'—sit upon their heels, in a kneeling posture, and defying wind and weather, make their way through the raging surf which beats upon the coast, and paddle out to sea at times when no other craft can venture to face it. At a little distance, the slight fabric on which these adventurous mariners float becomes invisible, and a fleet of them approaching from the land presents the absurd appearance of a host of savage-looking natives wading out towards the ship, up to their middle in water.

The figure of 'Catamaran Jack'—so the navigator of one of these primitive craft is called by the sailors—is quite in keeping with the simple machine on which he floats. He is perfectly naked, with the exception of having a piece of twine tied round his loins, to which is fastened a strip of cotton cloth about four inches wide—this, being passed between the legs, is tucked through the twine girdle behind, and, thus equipped, honest Jack thinks himself quite respectably dressed, and fit to be presented in any society. The Catamaran costume, like "Bryan O'Lin's" nether garment, possesses the undeniable advantage of being

"Cool summer wear."

But the material of which it is formed being rather slight, and constantly wet with sea water, it is apt, at first sight, to strike the European eye as being somewhat scanty, and the least shade in life too transparent. Such, at least, appeared to be the feeling amongst the female part of the community. For

when our friend Jack stepped on board, with the air of an admiral, and, like a well-bred man, advanced to make his salaam, he was saluted with a general scream of horror, mingled with smothered exclamations of "Nasty naked wretch!" "Horrid black monster!" etc.; and the ladies, covering their faces with their pocket handkerchiefs, rushed in a body to their cabins, where they remained for the rest of the morning in earnest consultation as to the possibility of landing in boats manned by such indecent savages.

The Masulah boats in which goods and passengers are transported across the famous Madras surf, although monstrous uncouth-looking things, are admirably adapted for the purpose to which they are applied. They are perfectly flat-bottomed, with high perpendicular sides, and are built without nails, the planks, formed of soft spongy wood which yields like cork and does not split, being sewed together with strong cords. This mode of construction gives them great buoyancy, and also renders them as pliant and elastic as a basket; so that they not only ride in safety over the giant waves, which, even in the finest weather, break upon this coast; but, when hurried forward by the last surf, and dashed upon the beach with a violence that would knock to pieces the strongest European boat, they yield to the shock without sustaining any injury, and the flat bottom forming a solid foundation on which to rest, they remain upright, instead of falling over on their bilge, as a boat of ordinary construction would do when the wave receded from her. The crew consists of ten or twelve rowers besides a 'tindal' or cockswain, who, standing on an elevated platform in the stern of the boat armed with a steering-oar, watches the run of the sea, directing the men when to pull, and guiding his unwieldy craft through the tremendous surf, with wonderful skill and presence of mind.

The "accommodation boats," which are generally provided for ladies, are merely a superior sort of Masulah boat. They are furnished with an awning to protect the passengers from the sun, and the crew are distinguished from their brother boatmen by wearing short cotton drawers extending half-way down to the knee; the men of the common Masulah boats being contented with the more simple costume of Catamaran Jack.

"By the mark ten!" sung out the leadsman in the chains.

"Stand by the anchor!—All ready forward there?"

"All ready, sir."—

"Let go!!"—

Whir!—Splash!—Away went thirty fathoms of chain cable with a noise like thunder. The ship swung slowly round to the tide, and, for the first time since leaving England, the sails were furled. Our voyage was ended. And the good old ship that had borne us safely through so many dangers slumbered peacefully on the bosom of the sunny waves, her weather-beaten sides and well-bleached cordage contrasting strongly with the bright paint and newly-tarred rigging of a homeward-bound ship that lay near us.

The moment we were fairly at anchor we were surrounded by a fleet of Masulah boats, and our decks crowded with staff officers and native servants of all grades and castes, from the pompous 'dobash' or head servant, to the cringing 'pariah' maty-boy, all clamorous for employment; and each striving, by vaunting his own virtues and detracting from the character of his neighbour, to insinuate himself into the good graces of some unsuspecting 'griffin.'

Reader, if it is ever thy fate to visit India, please to bear in mind that, of all unhanged knaves, these same Madras servants who infest newly arrived ships are the greatest. Having

succeeded in circumventing a 'griffin,' they remain with him just as long as they can cheat him with impunity; but the moment he becomes knowing enough to see through their roguery, they respectfully take their leave, and board the next ship that arrives to secure another victim.

The ladies landed to-day; but the troops do not disembark till to-morrow.

September 18*th.*—I had heard so much of the formidable Madras surf, that I was rather disappointed this morning at being landed with so little difficulty. The surf is certainly very heavy, and such as no European boat could live in. But a Masulah boat is so wonderfully buoyant, and the boatmen so thoroughly understand their business, that the operation of landing is attended with little if any real danger, although the roar of the surf, the wild shouting of the crew, and the anxious looks of 'Catamaran Jack,' who paddles alongside ready to pick you up from among the sharks in case of the boat being swamped, imparts rather a formidable aspect to the whole proceeding.

It was perfectly calm when we landed, but a long groundswell was rolling in, which rendered the surf heavier than it frequently is with a strong breeze upon the shore. Indeed, the surf is generally found to be heavier in calm weather, or with the wind off shore, than at any other time; but why it is so is more than my philosophy can explain.

The proper number of men having embarked, and having been cautioned to sit low and keep steady, the 'tindal' mounted his platform, and waving his hand with a dignified air, the crew began to paddle with short quick strokes, chanting in chorus a wild plaintive song to which they kept time. The ship's crew took leave of us with three cheers, to which we responded right heartily, and so we parted from our floating

home in which we had spent many a happy day. I had learnt to love the good old ship as one loves a horse that has carried him well through toil and danger, and I felt a weight at my heart as I stepped over the side and bade her adieu for ever.

As we neared the land the roar of the surf became each moment louder and louder, and, as it increased, the 'tindal' appeared to become excited, and the song of the boatmen waxed louder and more energetic. Having reached the back of the surf the crew discontinued their exertions, and our buoyant craft floated quietly upon the long glassy swell, which rolling from under her, rushed forward with inconceivable velocity, and burst upon the beach with a deafening roar.

The water being deep, there are only two of these enormous waves to be surmounted. One breaks upon the beach, and another about 150 yards further out, the space between the two being a smooth valley of green water, upon which a shoal of 'Catamarans' floated like waterfowl, ready to lend their aid in case of our boat being swamped.

The 'tindal'—a right cunning rogue—availed himself of the halt to impress upon our minds a due sense of the danger which awaited us, the almost superhuman skill it required on his part to carry us well through it, and the extreme propriety of my stimulating the exertions of the crew by promising them a handsome buckshish in the event of our being safely landed.

Having been previously cautioned against yielding to this piece of imposition, I informed the 'tindal,' as politely as I could, that I considered him a knave ; upon which, casting a sly glance at his companions—as much as to say, "this fellow is too knowing by half for a griffin"—he once more mounted

his platform, and addressed himself seriously to the business of landing. His manner now suddenly changed. He drew himself up to his full height, and assumed an air of command; his chest expanded, his eye flashing, and every faculty apparently roused to exertion.

For some minutes he remained perfectly motionless, his dark eye rolling anxiously from side to side as if watching for a favourable opportunity to advance. But wave after wave was allowed to roll past and burst upon the beach, whilst the crew, grasping their paddles firmly, and keeping their eyes fixed upon their leader, awaited his orders in silence. At last a sea heavier than usual was seen advancing.

"On, in the name of Allah!" shouted the 'tindal,' at the same time waving his paddle with frantic gestures, stamping violently on the deck, and yelling like a maniac. The crew responded to his wild cry, and striking up a strange hurried chaunt, which appeared to be a sort of invocation to Allah, pulled with desperate energy to keep pace with the wave which was now rolling under us. By means of extraordinary management and hard pulling, they succeeded in retaining their position, exactly on the shoulder of the wave, and immediately behind its foaming crest, till it burst with a roar like thunder, when another vigorous pull sent us shooting through the boiling foam; and, gliding down an inclined plane, we found ourselves rocking gently in a lane of green water, between two walls of raging surf, which shut out the view both of sea and land.

"Shabash! Shabash!" (well done) shouted the 'tindal,' stroking his moustache with a self-complacent air; and the panting crew, resting on their oars, awaited in silence his further orders.

When I looked back upon the tremendous mass of broken

water through which we had passed with so little apparent difficulty, I could hardly believe my senses, and began to feel a considerable degree of respect for the nautical talents of my friend the 'tindal,' who had exhibited so much skill and presence of mind in carrying us through it. Had he not retained his position on the shoulder of the wave with the most perfect precision, we should either have been left outside of the surf when it broke, and so been exposed to the advance of the next sea; or, had we pushed forward a moment too soon, would have plunged headlong over the foaming crest of the wave, and been turned bottom up, when it burst upon the beach.

After watching his opportunity for a few moments, the 'tindal' once more began to stamp and shout, the crew pulled with even greater energy than before, and rushing wildly forward on the crest of the wave, we were dashed upon the beach with a violence which nothing but the elastic frame of a Masulah boat could have withstood. The moment we touched the ground, the willing crew jumped overboard with the agility of monkeys, and hurrying the boat forward, beyond the reach of the advancing wave, landed us high and dry on the shores of India.

I was so much delighted with the workman-like manner in which the landing had been effected that I volunteered a small present to the crew, and was accordingly voted the most generous and amiable Sahib that had ever blessed the sight of 'Catamaran Jack.'

CHAPTER IV.

THE SUBALTERN IN INDIA.

INTELLIGENT reader, you have probably travelled beyond the shores of our sea-girt isle. If so, you must have experienced that peculiar sensation of wonder and bewilderment which comes over one on suddenly finding himself in a foreign land, surrounded for the first time by strange objects, and mingling with a crowd of strange people, wearing a fantastic garb, and speaking an unknown tongue. If you have not travelled, I can hardly hope to give you an adequate idea of my sensations on first landing at Madras.

I felt as if in a dream, or at a masquerade, or sitting in the pit of the Opera, to witness the performance of some splendid Oriental ballet ; or anywhere, in short, but actually in India. The transition from European to Oriental life had been too sudden, and it was some time before I could realise the idea, that the elephants, and camels, and palanquins, and hackaries, and turbaned men, and graceful women, with silken robes and jingling bangles, and all the other strange sights by which I was surrounded, were everyday objects, which would shortly become familiar to me, as if I had lived among them from my infancy.

Of all that met my eye, the shipping in the roads, and my little band of red-coats, who, like myself, looked very much like fish out of water, were the only familiar objects. Everything else was strange and new. The people, the buildings, the trees, the herbage, the cattle, the very dogs, had a foreign

air. The monotonous chaunt of palanquin-bearers, the grunting of camels and beating of 'tomtoms,' the wrangling of 'coolies' and bullock-drivers, in guttural Malabar; the more musical cadence of Hindostanee, and the soft Italian accent of the Tellagoo language, filled the ear with a strange mixture of sounds. Whilst the air, free from smoke, but heavy with the perfume of fruit, sandalwood, and spices, exposed for sale in the bazaar, forcibly reminded us that we were no longer in the land of coal-works, breweries, steam-engines, and cotton-mills; and I must confess the idea was pleasing to me.

I shall probably be voted an ignorant savage, by many, for expressing such a sentiment. But I am not ashamed to own that I have ever been an enthusiastic lover of nature, and a natural mode of life; and much as I rejoice at the prosperity of England, I like not the sources from which a great portion of her wealth is derived. There is something, to me, inexpressibly depressing in the neighbourhood of a large manufacturing town, where the blessed air of heaven is poisoned by sulphureous vapours, and the fair face of nature is blasted by the fiery breath of the demon of machinery; where vice and squalid misery haunt the footsteps of Mammon; and riches, like mushrooms, are forced from a hotbed of corruption.

Surely a pastoral life, with pure air and poverty, is preferable to riches earned at such a price. Surely the stanch English yeomen, and brave Scottish peasantry, are better men, and better subjects, and likely to prove better defenders of their country in time of need, than the demoralised population of our manufacturing districts, who, while they fill the pockets of their taskmasters with gold, fill also the workhouse with paupers, the hospital with patients, and the jail with malefactors.

We had hardly set foot upon the beach before we were surrounded by a host of clamorous natives, all eager to impose upon the newly-imported 'griffins,' and each talking with wonderful volubility, in a strange mixture of Hindostanee and broken English.

"'Salaam Sahib!'—Master please to want 'Dobash?'"—asked a sleek well-fed butler, in scarlet turban and flowing white muslin robes—making a profound obeisance, and thrusting into my hand a huge packet of written certificates of character, the greater number of which he had probably stolen or hired for the occasion. "I very good 'bootleer'—Plenty good character I got—General H——, 'Sahib!' Colonel S——, 'Sahib!' Doctor H——, 'Sahib!'—Plenty great gentlemen I serve!—Look, 'Sahib!'—Master please to read; that time he see I tell true word—I very good man!—Hindoo caste!—not can tell lie!—Ya, ya! suppose Hindoo man tell lie, that time Debil come catch!"

And here the varlet clapped his hands together, and turned up his eyes with a look of ineffable horror, as if the idea of falsehood dwelling in the breast of a Hindoo was something too dreadful to think of.

"'Maty-boy, Sahib,'" whined a long, half-starved slip of humanity in a dirty cotton robe, advancing with a crouching step, and producing, like his superior, a bundle of well-thumbed papers. "I very good 'Maty boy,' very honest man—I Christian caste—eat beef, drink brandy, all same like Master!"—Thereby implying, not that he was a Christian by profession, but belonging to that respectable body, which classed themselves with Christians and dogs, namely a 'Pariah,' untrammelled either by caste or religion, and ready to follow master's example in everything, even to eating beef, and drinking brandy, as often as he could get one, or steal the other.

"'Palkee, Sahib! Palkee!'" shouted a set of palanquin-bearers, sliding open the door, pointing, with expressive gestures, to the blazing sun, and striving by every means, short of absolute force, to urge me into their luxurious vehicle.

Thus were we beset by hawkers, jugglers, snake-charmers, 'coolies,' and mendicants, begging for coppers, and drawing up their wrinkled stomachs, in a most ingenious and extraordinary manner, in proof of their assertion that they had not tasted rice for three days.

After standing on the beach for upwards of an hour, braving the fury of a tropical sun, and keeping our assailants at bay as well as we could, the debarkation of the troops was completed, and we were marched up to Marmalong Bridge, seven miles from Madras, where we found tents pitched for our reception, and where we are to remain ten days or a fortnight, to make the necessary preparations previous to marching up the country to Bangalore.

Camp, Marmalong Bridge, September 30th. — We have now been upwards of ten days under canvas, and although we found the heat oppressive for the first few days, are becoming quite reconciled to our new mode of life. We have been busily engaged, since our arrival, in procuring tents, horses, servants, and camp equipage for our march, and are now ready to start at a moment's notice.

The following is a list of the principal things required previous to taking the field in India :—

A tent—single-poled for a subaltern, and double-poled for a captain, or field officer—with two or four bullocks to carry it, according to its size.

A portable camp-table, chair, and basin-stand.

A camp-cot, consisting of a light framework of wood, with a rattan bottom, and a thin cotton mattress, on which is

packed the table, chair, and other light articles—the whole being carried by two 'coolies' on their heads.

A good horse—or two of them, if you can afford it—with his attendants, a 'gorah-wallah,' or horse-keeper, and a grass-cutter—one of each being required for each horse.

A sufficient number of bullocks to carry your baggage.

Two servants: a 'dobash,' or head man, and a 'maty-boy.'

Two 'cowrie-baskets,' containing a sufficient stock of tea, sugar, coffee, brandy, and wax-candles, carried by a 'coolie,' suspended from the ends of an elastic slip of bamboo.

A couple of hog-spears—the spear-heads made by 'Arnat-chelem,' at 'Salim,' and the shafts of male bamboo brought from the 'Conkan.'

A hunting-knife, also made by 'Arnatchelem,' if possible.

A hunting-cap, strong in proportion to the respect you have for your skull—a thin plate of iron let into the crown is not a bad thing in a stony country.

A good stock of cheroots, and 'plenty' of ammunition—it being taken for granted that you are already provided with a gun, a rifle, and a telescope.

Some men, who study their comfort rather than their purse, indulge in a palanquin, a Chinese mat, a tent carpet, and many other little luxuries; but the fewer things of this kind a man hampers himself with the better.

Arab horses are almost universally used by Europeans. Native horses may be had very cheap, and some of them, the 'Cutch' horses in particular, are strong serviceable animals; but they are almost invariably savage, ill-tempered brutes, and so desperately pugnacious, that it is neither safe nor pleasant to ride them in company with another person. A friend of mine had an animal of this kind of so savage a temper

that it was necessary to blindfold his eyes, put a twitch upon his nose, and hold up one foreleg, before he would suffer himself to be mounted. Once mounted, he went as quiet as a lamb, provided you kept him out of reach of other horses, and was the most hardy, indefatigable brute for work I ever saw. But it was as much as the rider's life was worth to dismount before the brute was blindfolded and twitched; and woe betide the unlucky wight who got a fall from him. He might as well have been in the clutches of a Bengal tiger. No one but his own groom dared to go near him in the stable, and, even towards him, the temper of the animal was so capricious, that it was found necessary to fasten all his four legs to the ground by chains. I need hardly add that no one except his master, who was a beautiful horseman, and a dare-devil sort of character, cared to ride him.

Good Arab horses, such as are used for hacks or buggy-horses, may be had at a moderate rate—from £20 to £50; but hunters and racehorses fetch large sums—£200 and £300 for the former, and £1000, or upwards, for the latter, being no unusual price. A man, however, if he is a tolerable judge of a horse, and jockey enough to hold his own with an Arab horse-dealer—no easy matter by the way—may mount himself well, in any hunting-field, for £100.

The camp is daily filled with jugglers, snake-charmers, and itinerant tradesmen of all sorts, from shoemakers and tailors, up to goldsmiths and diamond merchants. These afford us 'griffins' a constant source of amusement, and drain our pockets of the little superfluous cash that remains.

Of all these, the people who interest me most are the 'Jungle Wallahs,' and 'Shikáris,' wild naked men from the jungles, who come in with live pea-fowl, jungle-fowl, partridge, antelope, jackals, and other wild animals, for sale.

Their free step and manly carriage, so different from that of the cringing wretches by whom we are surrounded, makes my heart warm towards them. I am weary of civilized life, and long to follow them into the wilds and forests of which I daily hear more tantalizing descriptions. It is a pretty sight to see one of these people coming in from the country, leading a tame antelope, and bearing on his head a large frame of wicker-work—like the trays used by Italian boys for carrying their plaster figures—on which are perched ten or a dozen wild peacocks and jungle-fowl. I was, at first, puzzled to account for the quiet manner in which the birds submitted to be thus carried, and, on closer inspection, was not a little disgusted to find that each poor bird had his eyelids stitched together so as effectually to prevent his seeing. This appears a dreadfully cruel way of reducing the poor creatures to tameness, but it has the desired effect, for the moment they are thus blindfolded, they no longer make any efforts to escape, but sit quietly on their perches, and allow themselves to be handled without moving — neither does it injure the sight, for, on cutting the stitches which closed the eyelids of one, I find the eye perfectly bright and clear, and the eyelid, although a little inflamed, likely to heal in a few days.*

* The people here called Shikáris consist of several very different and distinct tribes, each of which confines its efforts to the pursuit of some particular description of game. For instance, those described as carrying peafowl, jungle and spur fowl, partridges and quails, in tray-like baskets, are Párdees, originally from Northern India, and speaking a dialect of Mahratta or Hindi. Another class, called Eckalis or Terkalwar, capture all manner of water-fowl, and also falcons for training. They speak Teluga, and are natives of the Coromandel coast, whence they travel all over the country. A third tribe, more particularly described at page 78, are the Baorees, or Hurn Shikáris, who catch antelope in the manner described in the text, and likewise by means of springes made of deers' tendons, over which the animals are driven, whilst they are hemmed in on either side by long lines of cord, to which are

I am told that these people employ their tame antelope in catching wild ones, in the following manner:—The tame antelope, having a number of nooses fastened about his head and horns, is turned out in the plain, where a herd of wild antelope are observed; the old buck of the herd immediately advances to give battle to the intruder, his long spiral horns become entangled in the running knots, and the 'Shikári,' who has been lying in ambush, rushes out and secures him, before he has time to disengage himself.

Thanks to the kindness of a rich Madras merchant, to whom I had letters of introduction, and who not only gave me up a suite of rooms in his house, but had a buggy or a palanquin at my disposal whenever I required it, I have been enabled to see a good deal of Madras and its society, and never have I met with more real hospitality and friendship. The luxurious mode of living, the sociability, hospitality, and gaiety of the presidency, render it a delightful place of residence for a time. The cool morning ride, the sociable luncheon, the evening drive to enjoy the refreshing sea-breeze and listen to the music of a fine military band, the balls, private theatricals, and flirtations, are all delightful. But I have not come to India to enjoy English society; my object is to see the country and the natives, and much as I have enjoyed myself here, I confess that my heart begins to yearn for a wilder and more eventful life.

So much has already been written on the subject of Indian and Anglo-Indian manners, that I shall spare my reader a repetition of the crude remarks on Madras society which I find recorded in my journal, and proceed at once to the march.

attached tufts of feathers—a device that effectually hinders them from breaking away. They are also of Northern extraction, probably from Orissa, and speak a dialect of Hindustani.—W. E.

Marmalong Bridge, October 3d.—We commence our march to Bangalore to-morrow, and all is bustle and preparation in the camp. For the information of those who are curious in such matters, I subjoin a copy of the route to Bangalore, with the length of each day's march.

ROUTE FROM MADRAS TO BANGALORE.

	Miles.	Furlongs.
Poonamallee	12	4
Koratoor	8	1
Parumbaukum	14	3
Trimapoor	13	6
Allepaukum	10	1
Allecollum	9	4
Carnumpett	10	5
Laitairy Fort	11	2
Goriattum	13	5
Laulpett, near Sautgur . . .	13	4
Naickenairy, top of Peddoonaigdroog Pass .	10	0
Vencatagherry	9	2
Baitmunglum	11	2
Colar	18	2
Belloor	10	2
Ooscottah	15	1
Cantonment of Bangalore . .	16	0
Total miles .	207	4

Bangalore, November.—We arrived here on the 26th of this month, after an easy march of twenty-two days, including halts.

Provided the weather is favourable—that is to say, neither very wet nor very hot—for either extreme is disagreeable under canvas—I do not know a pleasanter way of spending one's time than in marching by easy stages in India. There is a mixture of wild independence and luxurious living, which is not to be found in any other mode of life, nor in any other country. There is beautiful scenery for the lover of nature—

jungles abounding in game, and plains covered with antelope, for the sportsman—fruits and flowers for the botanist—beasts and birds for the zoologist—insects, more than sufficient to satisfy the cravings even of a rabid entomologist—constant change of scene for the *ennuyé*—and plenty of fresh air and exercise for the dyspeptic. In short, a man can have very few resources within himself, or must be very hard to please, if he does not find subjects of interest and amusement—ay, and of improvement too—on a march in India.

The country between Madras and Bangalore is not exactly the hunting-ground which a sportsman, accustomed to better things, would select. There is too much cultivation, and the road is too much frequented. But to me, in my griffinage, it afforded ample sport. Hares, partridge, quail, and snipe, may be found at almost every stage, and after ascending to the table land of Mysore, there is a fair sprinkling of antelope on the plains.

In my journal, written at the time, I find the following description of the country through which we marched.

"The country through which we marched was certainly pretty, but there was a sameness, except in the immediate vicinity of the 'Ghauts,'* which made it rather monotonous. We, however, passed several places well worthy of observation, and some of our encamping grounds were strikingly beautiful. The road, for a great part of the way, was bordered by fine old trees, which not only afforded a delightful shade, but swarmed with paroquets, green pigeons, minas, and other tropical birds, which afforded constant objects of interest to a

* The Ghauts (the English 'gates' or passes) are two converging ranges of mountains which run parallel with the east and west coasts of the peninsula of Hindustan, and hence known as 'Eastern and Western Ghauts.'—Chambers' *Cyclopædia*.

novice in the study of natural history. There were plenty of wild monkeys, too, which afforded capital sport to the men. The whole camp used sometimes to turn out for a monkey-hunt, and, on one occasion, after a desperate chase of upwards of an hour, they succeeded in catching two; one died of the injuries he received in taking him, the other was brought here in safety, and is now the pet of the barracks; he wears a red jacket, drinks grog, and is learning to smoke tobacco; the sergeant-major, who prides himself not a little on his system of drill, does not despair of teaching him the manual and platoon exercise; and the drum-major is quite certain that he will soon be able to beat the tattoo.

"The first place worthy of notice on this route is Vellore, famous for the mutiny of the native troops, and also for the size and number of alligators with which the ditch round the fort abounds. These ravenous animals are not only unmolested, but encouraged, and fed; being considered, as they no doubt are, a great addition to the defences of the place. Their formidable jaws, however, have not sufficient terrors to deter some daring spirits among the European troops from crossing the ditch at night. I was told by an officer in the garrison, that some 'larking' young fellows in his regiment, having discovered that the alligators, being frightened by the discharge of artillery, are in the habit of sinking to the bottom, and hiding themselves in the mud for some minutes after the morning and evening gun are fired, avail themselves of the only two auspicious moments in the twenty-four hours, by swimming across the ditch the moment the evening gun is discharged—pushing before them a 'chatty' or light earthen jar into which their clothes have been previously stuffed—and after enjoying a night's amusement outside the walls, returning in the same manner at gunfire in the morning.

"From hence to the foot of the 'Ghauts' there is nothing particularly worthy of notice except a few native forts, some of which exhibit considerable skill in the art of fortification, and great judgment in the choice of position.

"As we approached the 'Ghauts,' the country which was hitherto flat gradually became more mountainous, and afforded some beautiful views. Our encampment at Laulpett, at the foot of the pass, and near the gardens of Sautgur—famous for a peculiarly fine species of orange—struck me as one of the most beautiful sights I ever beheld.* An Indian encampment, with its elephants, and camels, and 'tattoos,'† and bullocks, the various and picturesque dresses of the camp followers, and the number of handsome Arab horses, each picketed in rear of his master's tent, is at all times a striking object; but in such a situation as this, with a foreground of blooming orange groves, a background of lofty mountains, and the accessories of luxuriant tropical scenery lighted up by the warm glow of a tropical sunset, it forms a picture not easily forgotten, and still less easily described.

"From Laulpett we ascended the Peddoonaigdroog Pass, and halted for a day at the top, to rest the 'coolies' and beasts of burden. The scenery of the pass was wild and picturesque, but less grand than I expected. The jungle on each side of the road is very close, and was at one time much infested by tigers, but they are now rarely met with. The natives point out a place where a party of troops were attacked by a tiger about ten years ago, and two or three men killed.

"After ascending the pass we entered the Mysore country, which is flat, and strikes one as rather barren, after the

* To such of my readers who think the beauties of Laulpett exaggerated, I can only reply, that the description was written in my days of griffinage, and that I transcribe it *verbatim*.

† Native ponies.

Carnatic. The plains abound with antelope, but they are so wild, and the country so flat, that it is difficult to stalk them.

"The only place worthy of notice after this is Colar, celebrated as being the birth-place of Tippoo Sultan. It is a large village with a good bazaar, and is inhabited by several natives of rank. In front of the mosque we saw a Fakeer (a Mahomedan devotee) performing a curious and remarkably unpleasant act of penance. He was shod with a pair of wooden sandals, armed with long iron spikes, which, passing through the sole of his foot, came out at the instep, nailing his feet to the boards; and thus, staining the earth with his blood, he marched up and down chanting a hymn, and looking as unconcerned as if he were merely performing a pilgrimage, with his shoes full of boiled peas.

"Near the village of Narsapoor is a famous banian tree, said to be one of the largest in India—and certainly a marvellous specimen of tropical vegetation. We measured it as accurately as circumstances would permit, and found the dimensions to be as follows :—

"Girth of parent stem	90 feet.
Circumference of the whole cluster of stems at the roots	150 yards.
Circumference of shade afforded by the tree when the sun is vertical	470 yards.

We had no means of ascertaining the height of the tree, but it appeared enormous."

CHAPTER V.

AN EXCURSION TO DHARWAR.

Bangalore, February 13th.—It is only five months since I landed in India, and I have already been fortunate enough to obtain leave of absence to visit my brother, at Dharwar, in the Bombay presidency, about 280 miles from hence. I have not yet seen anything of the grander field sports of India; our exploits, at Bangalore, having been confined to coursing jackals, shooting snipe and quail, and "larding the lean earth" in our futile attempts to circumvent a certain herd of very shy antelope, which, being the only animals of the kind within ten miles of the station, are proportionately careful of themselves, and appear to have no stomach for "eating bullets." 'Inshallah!' they have laughed at our beards. But, from the account my brother gives of the country in the neighbourhood of Dharwar, I expect better sport before long.

I sent on my servants, baggage, and horses, some days ago, to Hurryhur, a military station on the banks of the Toombudrah, 185 miles from hence; and start to-morrow night, in a palanquin, to travel 'dawk,' that is, with posted bearers, who travel day and night, each set running a stage of from 10 to 15 miles. Travelling with a single set of bearers, who carry you from 25 to 30 miles a night, and halt during the day, is cheaper, and a pleasanter mode of performing a journey, as it gives the traveller an opportunity of seeing the country, and

keeping himself in game; but it is much slower, and, my leave being limited, I do not like to lose time by the way.

My brother is to meet me at Hurryhur, and from thence we march, by easy stages, to Dharwar—95 miles—hunting as we go.

On the night of the 14th of February I started from Bangalore by torchlight, and posted on, without halting, 137 miles, to Chittledroog, a fortified town, and strong hill-fort, belonging to the Rajah of Mysore, where I arrived on the afternoon of the 16th.

As I passed through the Fort gate, I was accosted, in tolerable English, by a respectable-looking native, who, after performing sundry very low 'salaams,' and assuring me that "my lordship's footsteps were welcome," begged to know whether 'Sahib' would be pleased to alight at the 'Bungalow,' which is kept up by the Rajah for the accommodation of European travellers, and of which he was the keeper.

After two nights' travelling in a palanquin, the prospect of a few hours' rest and a comfortable bath was a temptation not to be resisted, so I thanked my dusky friend for his polite offer, and was forthwith conducted to the 'Bungalow.'

It was formerly one of the Rajah's palaces, and although now rather out of repair, is still a fine building. The principal room is supported by carved stone pillars, and opens upon a handsome terrace, to which you ascend by a broad flight of steps, and in the centre of which is a fountain guarded by four elephants elaborately carved in black marble. The back of the house opens upon a large garden, which is kept in good order, and well stocked with grapes, oranges, plantains, mangos, and other fruits.

After I had bathed and made myself comfortable, and whilst some curry was being prepared, I received a visit

from the 'patell,' or head man of the village, who came in state, attended by the principal inhabitants, to pay his respects to the 'burrah sahib.' He was mounted on his best pony, the mane and tail of which were dyed bright scarlet, and followed by two or three servants bearing on their heads brazen dishes filled with fruit and flowers, as an offering to me.

I could hardly keep my gravity when I found myself—a jolly subaltern, with no other dress than a shirt, loose drawers, and slippers—seated in the midst of the rajah's hall of audience, to receive a deputation of handsomely dressed natives; but as they evidently took me for a great man, I did my best to sustain the character, and received their homage with the air of a three-tailed bashaw.

The 'patell,' who had been a soldier in his youth, was a fine handsome old man, and very talkative.

My stock of Oriental learning being as yet rather limited, I could not, of course, benefit by the many high-flown compliments which were bestowed upon me; but with the aid of mine host of the 'bungalow,' we managed to keep up the conversation pretty well.

The venerable 'patell' began by asking me my name, whence I came, and whither I was going. He then proceeded to ask after every European he had ever seen or heard of—taking it for granted that I must of course be intimately acquainted with them all—and was very particular in his inquiries about his old friend 'Wellesley Sahib'—against whom he had the honour of fighting when in Tippoo's service. He begged to know whether he was still alive, and if he had got a good pension; and appeared much pleased when I told him he had been appointed 'Grand Vizier' (Prime Minister) to the King of England. He stroked his snowy beard, exclaiming 'Atcha' (very good), and remarked that

'Wellesley Sahib' had been better treated than he; his rajah having only appointed him 'patell' of a village. Who the worthy man took me for I know not; but he evidently thought me a person of some importance, for he concluded his harangue by begging that I would exert my interest with the rajah to procure him a better appointment—a favour which I promised to grant the first time I was favoured with a private audience.

After sitting for an hour, I began to think the visit had been prolonged to a sufficient length, and my want of knowledge of Oriental customs might have prolonged it till next morning, had I not applied for advice to my interpreter, who, smiling at my ignorance of Indian etiquette, informed me that I, being the superior, my visitor could not take his departure without my giving him permission to do so. I accordingly desired the interpreter to inform him that, "the 'sahib' was graciously pleased to say he might take leave"—giving him at the same time a present of a few rupees in return for his fruit. And the old gentleman, making his best 'salaam,' bowed himself out amidst a flourish of trumpets.

By the time I had finished my curry the sun had set, so bidding my obliging friend adieu, I stepped into my palanquin, and resumed my journey.

The monotonous chaunt of the bearers soon lulled me to sleep, and all went well till about three o'clock in the morning, when I was roused from a sound sleep by feeling the palanquin come bump upon the ground.

On jumping out I found that my conveyance—a ricketty old concern at the best—had fairly broken down, the fore pole being snapped off close to the body, and the hind one badly sprung.

A remarkably pleasant adventure, thought I, after I had

ascertained the full extent of the damage. Here am I, in the midst of a jungle, two days' march from the nearest military station, and heaven knows how far from any village; the night as dark as Erebus; and the bearers—a set of half-savage villagers who do not understand a word I say—squatted round me on their heels, and jabbering like a parcel of monkeys in concert to the dismal howling of the jackals, but making no attempt to remedy the mischief. "The 'sahib's' star is unfortunate;" "It is our fate;" that is enough for them; and there they sit with true Oriental apathy, twirling their moustaches, and staring at the shattered palanquin, as if they expected new poles to grow of their own accord.

After a great deal of talking, and scolding, and violent gesticulation, I at last succeeded in making the wretches understand that, in spite of fate and unlucky stars, I was determined to proceed; and having got them to raise the body of the palanquin on their heads, we resumed our march, the 'mussaulchie'* leading the way with his torch, and I bringing up the rear with the broken pole over my shoulder.

Having proceeded in this manner about a couple of miles, we arrived at a small cluster of huts in the midst of the jungle. Here the palanquin was set down, the bearers once more squatted upon their heels, and the shouting and lamentations were resumed. The inhabitants of the village, alarmed by such unusual sounds, rushed out of their huts, and stared at the broken palanquin, and talked, and shouted, and held up their hands in astonishment at the extraordinary ill luck which attended the 'sahib's' star; but no one appeared to have

* A posting team of palanquin-bearers consists of twelve men, and a mussaulchie or torch-bearer, whose duty it is to supply torches and oil, and to light the footsteps of his comrades.

the most remote idea of what ought to be done under the circumstances.

It was in vain that I stamped, and raged, and showed them money, and made signs that I wanted ropes to mend the palanquin. The poor people only shook their heads, and drew back from me in alarm, as if they thought me deranged. At last, after having put myself in a terrible heat, and exhausted my whole stock of invectives in bad Hindostanee, and worse Malabar, two or three men left the crowd and ran into the village; so, thinking that I had at last made them understand what I wanted, I lighted a cheroot and sat down on the top of my disabled palanquin to await the result with patience; whilst the bearers remained squatted on the ground, with their eyes fixed upon me, as if they fancied I was performing an incantation which was to set all to rights.

By the time my cheroot was finished, my patience was also exhausted, the crowd had dispersed, and still no appearance of anything being done. So, as a last resource, I seized the torch, and taking one of the bearers with me, went on a voyage of discovery round the village. The houses were all closed, and no one would reply to my repeated knocking; but, at last, in an outhouse, I discovered a goodly piece of bamboo, which I took possession of, and a little further search produced a coil of rope, and a small hatchet, which I also appropriated, and with these materials I soon managed to splice the hind pole, and rigged on a sort of yard across the front of the palanquin, which, although anything but a workmanlike job, served very well to carry it empty to the next stage.

By the time my arrangements were completed it was broad daylight; so, with a hearty malediction bestowed upon the stupid 'Jungle Wallahs,' I shouldered my rifle, and proceeded on my way.

A fatiguing walk of fifteen miles, under a broiling sun, brought us to a good-sized village, where I managed to get my palanquin sufficiently well secured to carry me on, and, about sunset, reached Hurryhur without further adventure.

Hurryhur, February 21*st.*—Hurryhur is a small cantonment for one regiment, and having been only lately established, there are not more than two or three houses built for the officers; the remainder living in their tents. It is situated in the midst of a barren sandy plain, with hardly a tree or shrub in sight, and looks the very picture of desolation. The regiment quartered here is the 24th native infantry. I brought a letter of introduction to one of the officers, by whom I have been most hospitably received and comfortably lodged. There are not more than five or six officers present with the regiment, and only one lady, the adjutant's wife, who tells me she has not seen the face of a European woman for two years, and complains sadly of the dulness of the place. The country about here is in a very disturbed state. The regiment is ordered to march in a few days, to attack a petty rajah who has revolted, and fortified himself so strongly in a hill fort among the Western Ghauts, that all efforts to dislodge him have hitherto failed. He is so situated that artillery cannot be brought to bear upon him, and they will have either to shell him out or reduce him by famine. The poor adjutant's wife is to be left with an assistant-surgeon, and a few invalids, to take charge of the cantonment, and does not appear at all happy at the prospect.

My servants and horses, which I sent on before me from Bangalore, did not arrive till yesterday evening; so that I have been obliged to vegetate here ever since the 17th; and, in spite of the kindness and hospitality I have experienced, am beginning to weary sadly of Hurryhur and the adjutant's wife.

I have just received a letter from my brother, saying that he cannot meet me here, as he intended, and proposing the following route, which I intend to adopt.

He is to have bearers laid for the first forty miles, to Davigherry, and from thence to Dharwar (fifty-five miles) three of his own horses are to be posted at equal distances. I shall leave this to-morrow evening ; run the first forty miles during the night ; start from Davigherry at daylight ; and ride into Dharwar, in time for a late breakfast.

Dharwar, February 24th.—I arrived here yesterday without any adventure worthy of remark, except having been stopped during the night by a party of the disaffected natives, who, as I before remarked, are in a very unsettled state, and have stopped and plundered several travellers of late.

I was awakened, in the middle of the night, by feeling the palanquin set down, and hearing a scuffle outside. On jumping out, with a pistol in each hand, I found myself surrounded by twenty or thirty wild-looking men, armed with sticks, knives, and old swords. Two or three of the bearers were lying on the ground with broken heads ; and the others, who it appeared had made some shew of resistance, were getting unmercifully mauled. Knowing that with my two pistols, besides a rifle and double-barrelled gun, which were also in the palanquin, ready loaded, I was more than a match for the poor half-naked wretches who surrounded me, I did not like to shed blood unnecessarily ; and, in spite of the urgent entreaties of the bearers to fire, I contented myself with talking in an angry tone, pointing to my pistols, and making signs to the people to disperse. At first they drew back ; but when one of the fellows advanced towards me, brandishing a knife, I immediately fired over his head, keeping the other pistol ready to fire into him, if necessary. This answered

my purpose quite as well as if I had sent the poor misguided wretch to the shades before his time, for he immediately turned tail, and his companions, uttering a yell of terror, fled in all directions.

And so I obtained a signal victory, which was all the more satisfactory for having been bloodless.

After posting on quietly for the remainder of the night, I arrived, about daybreak, at the village of Davigherry, where I found my first horse, with a 'sowar,' or native trooper, to act as guide. I immediately mounted, leaving my palanquin in charge of the horsekeeper, and the nags being all in hunting condition, with a fresh guide at each stage, I cantered over the remaining fifty-five miles in less than five hours, and had the happiness of once more embracing my dear brother, whom I had not seen for many years.

Dharwar, being situated more than 3000 feet above the level of the sea, enjoys a cool and healthy climate. The thermometer seldom ranges higher than 80°, and the nights are frequently cold enough to render one, and even two blankets desirable.

The country in the immediate vicinity is admirably adapted for sporting, being beautifully diversified with low jungle, open plains, and small lakes, and there is no lack of game; but, beyond this, it has nothing to recommend it as an agreeable station. A regiment of native infantry, the collector of the district, four ladies, and a few young civilians, constitute the entire society; and three ladies, out of the four, are anything but young, pretty, or agreeable.

To any one, therefore, but an inveterate sportsman, Dharwar must prove a dull station, and even to him the want of female society is a great privation.

Although I have not been here more than a month, I

already feel this. No one can enjoy the wild excitement of a hunter's life more than I do; but this, instead of weaning me from the more refined pleasures of civilized society, only tends to heighten my enjoyment when I return to it. Verily it is not good for man to be alone. He is by nature a savage, and it is only the refining influence of the gentler sex—the angels of creation—that saves him from utter barbarism.

In other respects the society of Dharwar is decidedly above par. The civilians, in particular, are exceedingly well-informed and gentlemanlike young men, and are first-rate sportsmen, without any of the slang and swagger of 'sporting men.' They neither keep bull-dogs nor fighting-cocks, nor do they dress like 'swell dragsmen,' and talk like stable-boys. They make use of good honest homely English, in preference to the pick-pocket slang, which I regret to say is now becoming much too common, and which, when interlarded with a few quaint blasphemies, is supposed to impart force and brilliancy to the conversation of the 'bang up sporting character.' Half the heroes of 'the ring' are unknown to them even by name, and I doubt much whether one among them could answer the simple questions, "Who wears the champion's belt?" "What is the exact weight of the famous dog Billy?" or "Whether the Manchester Pet or the Game Chicken came off victorious in the last mill?" And yet I have never met with harder riders, better rifle-shots, or stancher men to back you in the hour of danger, than these same quiet gentlemanlike civilians.

This for the information of the young gentlemen of the rising generation, upon whose minds I—as an old sportsman who has seen a little of the world—wish to impress this doctrine, that neither the use of slang expressions, the society of sporting 'coves,' a sporting style of dress, nor the study of

Bell's Life, are conducive to the formation of a good sportsman, but rather the reverse. A sporting character, and a good sportsman, are two perfectly distinct animals.

Instead of devoting their time to such acquirements, I would strongly urge upon them the necessity of studying drawing, comparative anatomy, and natural history in all its branches, from the geological formation of a mountain to the reproduction of a plant; for, without the refining influence of some such knowledge, the pursuits of the sportsman lose half their charm—that of being able to study with advantage the great book of nature—and become the occupation of a savage, who slays that he may eat; or, worse still, they degenerate into the mere bloodthirsty instinct of a beast of prey. Whereas, to a man of cultivated mind, they not only afford a healthy and exciting amusement, bracing alike to mind and body; but, if pursued in a proper spirit, present constant opportunities of studying the glorious works of creation, and storing up knowledge which must prove useful to himself, and may prove useful to others.

A press of business, which keeps my civilian friends close at work, has hitherto prevented our making out a long-talked-of expedition to the Great Canara Forest, where that splendid animal, the Indian bison, abounds. But, in the meantime, I find plenty of occupation, during the cool hours of morning and evening, stalking deer in the neighbouring jungle, or shooting antelope, which abound on the black cotton-ground within a few miles of the cantonment; and I generally manage to keep the mess pretty well supplied with venison.

The heat of the day is devoted to reading, studying natural history, preparing specimens, and making drawings of any rare animal I may have met with in my morning ramble; and in the evening we all dine together, each of the

young civilians taking it in turn to act the part of host and supply the liquids.

The Southern Mahratta country, in which Dharwar is situated, presents a fine field for the naturalist as well as the sportsman, affording, as it does, almost every variety of game found in India.*

* Of beasts of prey, the tiger and two varieties of panther are numerous.

The Cheetah, or hunting-leopard (*Felis Venatica*), is rather more rare, and a variety of the tiger-cat is found occasionally.

The Indian bear (*Ursus Labiatus*) is common in all hilly districts.

Wild-hogs abound in the jungles, but are daily becoming more scarce in the open country.

Hyenas, wolves, wild-dogs, jackals, and foxes abound, occasionally affording an hour's sport, in default of nobler game.

Wild elephants are found in the Canara Forest, on the western frontier of the district.

Within twenty miles of Dharwar, we find the Indian bison (*Bos Gaurus*).

That noble deer, the Sambar, or Rusa-deer (*Cervus Aristotelis*), standing about sixteen hands high, and commonly called the elk, probably on account of its great size.

The beautiful spotted deer, or cheetle (*Cervus Axis*).

The rib-faced deer, or muntjak (*Cervus Muntjak*), and the dwarf musk-deer (*Moscus Memina*), hardly so large as a hare.

The neilghau (*Damalis Risia*) frequents the baubul jungles to the eastward.

Low coverts upon rising grounds are the favourite haunts of the four-horned antelope (*Antilope Chickara*).

The little graceful gazelle (*Antilope Cora*) is found in great numbers, scattered over the barren ground, between the great forest-jungle and the extensive plains of black alluvial soil, commonly called cotton-ground, where the common antelope (*Antilope Cervicapra*) and bustard afford constant and beautiful practice for the rifle.

Of small game there is also a great variety; but, except for the sake of supplying our mess-table, we do not trouble them much.

The painted snipe (*Scolopax Capensis*), the common snipe, and a great variety of the duck tribe and waders, are numerous.

Hares, pea-fowl, jungle-fowl, spur-fowl, three varieties of partridge—painted, black, and gray—the florican (*Otis Aurita*), sand-grouse (*Tetrao Arenarius*), and five varieties of quail, complete the list.

CHAPTER VI.

SPORT AT DHARWAR.

March 1st.—We have opened our campaign gloriously! Yesterday I shot two spotted bucks before breakfast; and to-day we have taken the scalp of the famous wandering tiger, which has been the terror of the neighbourhood for the last six months.

This morning, Elliot's native hunters, who have been on the trail of the tiger for a week past, brought intelligence that they had at last succeeded in marking him down. After following him from jungle to jungle, they watched him, at day-break this morning, as he was returning to the Omlekop thickets, and turned him into one of the small ravines on the hills, beyond Munsoor, where he was surrounded, and word sent into camp that we should lose no time in going out, as he was savage, and likely to break through the line.

Old 'Anak,' a fine elephant, which we have borrowed from a neighbouring rajah, was instantly despatched with guns and ammunition in the howdah, and Elliot, my brother, and I, followed soon after on horseback. On arriving at the ground, eight miles from camp, we found everything looking well for a certain kill. The tiger had been marked into a small open ravine, where there was no strong cover, and every rising ground within sight was crowned by a look-out man, to turn him or mark him down if he should break away.

All possible precautions having been taken to prevent his

escape, we mounted the elephant, and the tiger was roused by a rattle of 'tomtoms' and a wild shout from the beaters. He was on foot in a moment, and, with a loud roar, dashed from the ravine, and took away across country at a lobbing gallop.

The elephant was badly placed, and the tiger passed us at a distance of 150 yards, going at a pace which rendered the chances of hitting him very slight indeed. Two balls rang among the rocks close behind him, and just as he was topping the hill, a long rifle-shot appeared to touch him, for a short angry roar was borne back upon the breeze, and the beaters made signs that he was hit.

We followed at the best pace old 'Anak' could muster, and on reaching the summit of the hill, saw the tiger slowly stealing down a ravine on the opposite side. He was out of shot, and we halted to mark him down, and to send the beaters to a place of safety; for he was evidently wounded, and therefore dangerous. One man alone, intoxicated with opium, disregarded every warning signal: the tiger was going straight towards him; we called and beckoned in vain; the infatuated wretch drew his sword, and waved it in defiance, while we saw the fatal crisis approaching, and could do nothing to save him.

Elliot ordered the 'mahout' to urge the elephant forward at his utmost speed. I shall never forget the excitement of that moment. My brother and I, both novices in tiger-hunting, were almost in a rabid state; and in our anxiety to rescue the doomed wretch from his impending fate, we stamped with impatience, and abused the driver for not exerting himself sufficiently, although he was plying the goad with all his strength, making the blood flow, and extorting a scream of pain from the unfortunate elephant at every stroke.

But all was in vain. Before we were half way down the

hill, the tiger had caught sight of the poor helpless drunkard, standing directly in his path, and his doom was sealed. He might still have made an effort to escape, for he had a long start; but he appeared paralysed by fear when he saw the tiger making directly towards him with terrific bounds. The brute was upon him with the speed of light. We saw him rear for an instant over his victim, who attempted to defend himself with his sword and shield. One savage roar rang through the soul of the stricken wretch, and he was dashed to the ground, amidst a cloud of dust, through which we could just distinguish the agitated forms of the tiger and the wretched man, writhing like a crushed worm in his gripe. It was over in an instant. The tiger trotted off, sulkily, to a small patch of thorny bushes, and being now excited to madness by the taste of blood, stood boldly awaiting our attack.

The elephant was pushed forward with all speed, the tiger roaring furiously as we advanced, and the moment his splendid head appeared, a volley from six barrels sent him back staggering into the centre of the bush. He rallied instantly, and made a brilliant charge close up to the elephant's trunk, when he was again turned by a well-directed volley from the spare guns, and retreated growling to his lair.

We now retired a short distance to reload; and when we advanced again, the tiger, although bleeding at every pore, rushed forth to meet us, as savage as ever. He was again turned before he could spring on the elephant, and again dragged forward his bleeding body to the charge, roaring as if his heart would burst with impotent rage. We now let him come up quite close, so that every ball might tell, and gave him shot after shot, till he crawled back exhausted into the bushes. We followed him up, and in a last expiring effort to

reach the elephant, he was shot dead, while struggling to make good his charge. He was game to the last, and Elliot, who has killed many tigers, says he never saw one die more gallantly.

Having ascertained, by poking him with a spear, that the tiger was actually dead, we dismounted from the 'howdah,' and, leaving the 'mahout' to reward his unwieldy pet after his exertions, by giving him balls of sugar dipped in the tiger's blood, went to look after the unfortunate beater who had been struck down. We found him lying under a bush, in a dying state, and a more frightful spectacle I never beheld. His lower jaw was carried away as if he had been struck by a cannon ball, his cheek bones were crushed to pieces, and the lacerated muscles of the throat hung down over his chest. So dreadful was the injury that literally nothing of the face was left below the eyes. He appeared quite sensible, poor fellow, and made frantic signs for water, whilst his bloodshot eyes rolling wildly, imparted to the shattered head the most ghastly expression I have ever beheld. It was, of course, impossible to afford him the slightest relief, and death soon put an end to his sufferings.

I was much struck by the extraordinary apathy of the natives on this occasion; many of them passed the mangled body of their companion with a careless glance, merely remarking "that it was his fate;" and those who remained to witness his dying struggles evinced no more feeling for him than if he had been a dog, unless their suggestion that we should put an end to his misery by shooting him through the head might be considered as such. The poor fellow himself intimated, by signs, that he wished us to do so; but we could not, of course, comply with his request.

The important operation of singeing the tiger's whiskers

having been performed by the oldest native hunter,* the carcass was laid upon a cart, drawn by six bullocks, and decorated with flags, and was thus dragged home in triumph.

On skinning the tiger we found sixteen balls lodged in his body, most of which had entered his chest ; a strong proof of the extraordinary tenacity of life possessed by these animals.

He was a male, about the medium size, and his dimensions as follows :—†

	Feet.	Inches.
Length from point of nose to point of tail	9	5
Length of tail	2	10
Height from heel to shoulder	3	2
Length from shoulder to point of toe	3	11
From elbow to point of toe	2	0
Girth of body, immediately behind the shoulder	5	3
Girth of forearm	2	7
Girth of neck	3	0
Girth of head	3	3

* The natives have a superstitious belief that, unless the whiskers of a tiger are singed off immediately after he is killed, they will be haunted by his ghost.

† A tiger 9 feet 5 inches may be pronounced by some sportsmen, accustomed to hear of tigers of 12 and even 14 feet in length, to be a small specimen. But such was by no means the case. The animal in question was a full-sized specimen, of very thick, robust shape, and was measured with scrupulous accuracy, and without the natural wish of young sportsmen to magnify the size of their victim. There are various ways in which measurements of large game are taken. Many, I may say most men, content themselves with taking the length of the skin when pegged out to dry, after the beast has been flayed. It is thus that the 12 and 14 feet measurements are obtained. From the examination of a great number of individuals—not less than from 200 to 300 carefully measured—I am satisfied that few tigers exceed 10 feet in length, and that the majority fall short of that limit. Then there is as great variety of form and proportion among tigers as among men. Some individuals are the long, lanky animals, others short and stout. Again, there is great diversity in the length of the tail, which is always taken into the notation of the length. Some tigers have long, others short tails, in proportion to their bodies. It is obvious how these several circumstances modify the idea of size formed from a statement of the total length alone.—W. E.

For the last week I have devoted my time almost exclusively to antelope-shooting on the Black Plain, where the apparently endless level extends on all sides to the horizon, like a dark sea studded with little hillocks that resemble islands. Morning and evening I ride out here, armed with my rifle, spear, and telescope, and wander over the cotton-ground where the antelope feed, watching their habits, and daily discovering some new and interesting feature in their character.

The Indian antelope*—the 'quarry' of the Hindoo gods—is considerably larger than the roebuck, an adult male standing nearly three feet at the shoulder, and weighing about ninety pounds. The old bucks are dark coffee-brown, or nearly black above, and white beneath, with a white spot round the eye; head long, nose rather square and blunt, with an incipient muzzle, or naked space between the nostrils. Horns from eighteen to twenty-two inches long, dark brown, annulated with from twelve to twenty-two rings, and beautifully twisted in a spiral form. Female hornless, pale fulvous above, white beneath, with a white line running along the side. Very young males are of the same colour as the female, but become gradually darker with age, till at five or six years old they have acquired the darkest hue, and are then called black bucks. They are

* The Indian antelope "is not less remarkable for beauty of form, and elegant distribution of colours, than for the interest it has excited, from the remotest antiquity, among the nations and philosophic legislators of the regions where it resides. They have raised the common antelope among the constellations, harnessed it to the chariot of the moon, and represented it as the quarry of the gods. In the opinion of Hindoos the animal is sacred to Chandra (or the moon); female devotees and minstrels lead it, domesticated by the harmony of their instruments, or the power of their prayers; and holy Bramins are directed to feed upon their flesh, under certain circumstances prescribed by the institutes of Menu."—Cuvier's *Animal Kingdom*, with Additional Descriptions by Edward Griffiths and others.

gregarious, and go in herds of from ten to twenty ; each herd being under the command of an old black buck.

This is their rutting season, during which period desperate engagements take place between the males : they fight with great obstinacy, lowering their heads and tilting at each other so furiously, that their long spiral horns frequently snap in the encounter. When a stray doe gets accidentally, or perhaps intentionally, into a herd of young males—who, driven away by the old black bucks, form themselves into a club of bachelors—a series of single combats ensues, which are maintained for hours, till the strongest or most chivalrous of the fraternity shews a decided superiority over all the others.

The little timid doe, who has stood aloof anxiously watching the progress of the fight—like Helen, the cause of many woes—now quietly walks off with the victor.

Valiant alike in love and war, the conqueror, with swelling throat, tail curled proudly over his back, and head erect, sidles up to his hard-won prize, uttering a low bellow of delight. The skittish doe repels his advances, tosses her pretty head, and starts off in a succession of graceful bounds, cleaving the air like a meteor.

On, with the speed of light, dashes the excited buck, stretching himself across the plain in a long striding gallop, the rapid stroke of which is more than the eye can follow, and at length overtakes the bounding doe in a race where his muscular powers are taxed to the utmost.

When the doe is wearied out, and can no longer avoid the male—who even has recourse to blows to bring her to subjection—she yields herself, and remains in company with the buck for several days, generally in some secluded spot, where no intruder is likely to interrupt their honeymoon.

I have observed, and watched for several successive days, a pair in this retirement, and have seen the poor buck at length driven from his partner by some more powerful rival, whom the doe follows, always becoming the willing prey of the conqueror.

The beaten buck generally leads the life of a hermit for the rest of the season, but sometimes returns to the society of his bachelor friends.

It often happens that the old black buck of a herd is led astray by one of his own skittish does, and does not return till another male has usurped his place, and established himself in the good graces of the ladies of his harem. If both bucks happen to be renowned warriors a desperate combat ensues, which is seldom decided without a broken horn at least. But if the intruder be a young male, he walks off at once, like a wise dog, who leaves the room as soon as he sees preparations making for throwing him out of the window.

Antelope exhibit great affection for their young, exposing themselves, in their defence, to dangers which they most dread. I met with a remarkable instance of this while trying to approach within shot of a black buck, in company with a doe and fawn. The fawn followed the doe when she made off at my approach; but its weakness not allowing it to keep pace with the old ones, they both halted, and forced it by blows to crouch in a furrow. As often as it attempted to rise, they returned and pushed it down again, remaining by it, although I had by this time approached within shot, as long as the fawn continued to shew itself. This display of parental affection quite disarmed me, and I left the poor things unmolested.

To give my readers an idea of the various methods of killing and taking antelope, I shall transcribe the account of a few days' sport selected from my journal, kept at Dharwar,

from whence I made excursions into the neighbouring districts, where antelope most abounded. The native names are those of the villages where I pitched my tents.

"*Kardagee, March* 1*st.*—Here I am again, in the land of the antelope, working the long rifle daily, and keeping myself and followers plentifully supplied with venison—I killed three this morning, missing but one shot. The first dropped dead, hit in the shoulder; the second, a black buck with twenty-one inch horns, distant one hundred and ninety yards, fell after running at full speed about a quarter of a mile, although the ball, weighing nearly an ounce and a half, had passed through his body close to the heart: the third, a fine buck with twenty inch horns, was feeding with his hind-quarters towards me, when I fired; he raised his head just as I covered him with the sight, and receiving the ball in the back of the neck, dropped dead, without moving a limb.

"*March* 2*d.*—To-day I only killed one antelope, which I brought down at a long range; he got up again, although shot through the loins, and led me a gallop that made old 'Vulcan's' tail shake before I speared him."

"*Gudduk, April* 26*th.*—Shot badly this morning, and missed several fair shots, which I ought to have hit; the antelope, in this part of the country, being by no means shy. On my way home, I tried the speed of a young buck, and found that 'Merlin,' although a fast horse, could not touch him over a dead plain. I was pulling up after going about a mile, when chance put the buck in my power. In jumping a ravine, he fell and broke his fore-leg. I observed his lameness, and a gallop across a few fields blew him so completely, that I ran into and speared him."

"*Sudugee, November* 19*th.*—Nothing has been done to-day, except taking out the Kolapoor Rajah's hunting-cheetahs.

They had three runs each at bucks without killing, which I was not sorry for, as this, like falconing and coursing, is a sport by no means to my taste. All I wished to see was the extraordinary degree of speed exerted by the leopard in chase; and this was displayed to-day in perfection. The rapidity of his stroke, and the length of his bounds, are almost incredible; giving a rate of going, for a few seconds, too rapid for the eye to follow. In judging of the speed exerted, there is only this to guide you—an antelope, one of the swiftest animals in nature, going his best pace, and straining every nerve to escape; and the bounding leopard, flying through the air with a velocity that gains upon his prey as if it were only going at a gentle canter. The reason of their not killing to-day, was being slipped at too great a distance, the antelope being very shy. Neither of the leopards could or would keep up his prodigious velocity for more than three hundred yards; and failing to strike the buck within this distance, he became sulky, lay down, and remained growling, till the keeper, coming up with his cart, blindfolded and secured him, after having appeased his wrath with a lump of raw meat. This style of hunting is a beautiful sight to see once; but, in my opinion, is a sport better calculated to please an effeminate rajah than a European sportsman."

"*Noulgoond, May* 13*th*.—The antelope here are extremely shy, owing chiefly to their having been much persecuted of late by a tribe of 'Hurn shikáris' (deer-hunters), encamped in the neighbourhood. These people—a wandering caste of natives, who earn a livelihood by snaring game—not only destroy great numbers of antelope, but render the animals so wild by constantly driving them towards their snares, that they start off the moment a man appears in sight. Their method of taking them is as follows:—

"Having selected a convenient spot frequented by antelope, they erect two oblique lines of small bamboos driven into the ground, beginning at about three hundred yards apart, and bringing them gradually together in the form of a funnel, till they are within forty or fifty yards of each other. Along the oblique lines of upright posts, they extend cords, to which are suspended feathers and white pieces of antelope skins that flutter in the wind, and across the narrow passage, between the two lines, are fastened loops and snares of various kinds. This being prepared, the whole tribe, men, women, and children, turn out, and surrounding a herd of antelope, drive them quietly towards the wide part of the enclosure. Here they rush upon the antelope with tremendous yells, and the poor animals, terrified by the noise behind them, and scared from turning to the right or left by the fluttering of the feathers and pieces of white skin, rush blindly forward, and in trying to escape through the narrow passage, are entangled in the snares and taken.

"Another method of taking antelope is by means of a tame buck, who having a number of wire nooses fastened about his head and horns, is turned out in the plain where a herd of wild antelope are feeding. No sooner does he approach the herd, than the old buck steps forth and gives battle to the intruder; his long spiral horns become entangled in the nooses attached to the head of his antagonist, and the hunter, who has been lying in ambush, runs up and secures him before he has time to disengage himself.

"For the last week I have toiled across the heavy black plain for many hours every morning without once getting within shot of an antelope. Yesterday I tried an expedient commonly resorted to by native hunters, of approaching my game under cover of a light movable frame of bamboo,

clothed with branches; but in this I failed, either from my own want of skill, or from the antelope having become acquainted with this artifice. To-day I tried the experiment of using a stalking bullock, and with better success. It enabled me to get within one hundred yards of a large herd, headed by an old black buck, which I knocked over with the second barrel whilst going at speed, after having missed a fair standing shot with the first.

"*May* 22*d*.—To-day the stalking bullock failed me, and being in want of venison, I tried the experiment of driving the antelope. Having remarked the course which they generally took when disturbed, I posted myself in a ravine as nearly as I could guess in their line, and sent my man a circuit of a couple of miles, on horseback, to drive them towards me. He played his part admirably; the antelope crossed the ravine within twenty yards of me, and I dropped two of them, right and left.

"*May* 23*d*.—I crossed the river this morning in search of new ground; for the antelope near our encampment now know my green coat so well, that it no sooner appears upon the plain, than every one makes off as if a 'cheetah' had been slipped at them. I shot one buck out of a herd of young males less shy than the others. I fired at a long range of two hundred yards, and broke his foreleg near the shoulder; but he went away upon the remaining three at a rate which 'Challenger's' best pace could not equal. By the time I was mounted the buck had a long start, skimming like a bird over the treacherous cotton-ground covered with holes. I was pressing little 'Challenger' to do his utmost, when he sank to the knees in a deep fissure, and rolled over with a tremendous crash, going several times head over heels before the impetus of his speed was exhausted. We both got up rather

stunned, and I found myself lying twenty yards from my horse, with my hunting-cap driven into the earth, leaving a beautiful cast of its figure. The buck was out of sight, but I knew where he was making for; and, it being quite contrary to my principles to leave a poor wounded animal to die a lingering death, I *laid in* again till a glimpse of a distant herd assured me that my quarry was among them—for I had observed that a wounded antelope when pressed always tries to join a herd—I could soon distinguish him by his lameness, and singling him out, I rattled him for about a mile over broken ground, when he became blown, and I speared him. He was a middle-sized buck, with horns of thirteen inches.

"*May 25th.*—My brother's horse, 'Merlin,' performed a feat to-day, which I believe has never yet been accomplished by any horse in India—that of running down a full-grown buck antelope. We were returning in a sulky mood after a long walk over the plain, having shot badly, and missed where we ought to have killed to a certainty. A fine buck had been leading us a long round without allowing us to get within range, and we had mounted with the intention of riding back to the tents. My brother's horse was in one of his fidgety moods, fretting and bucking like a goat, till at last he lost patience, and seeing the buck that had baffled us trotting along with a supercilious air, he gave 'Merlin' his head, and laid into him out of pure devilry. The horse was always a speedy thing, and being now in racing condition, he pressed the buck so hard, that, after going a couple of miles, my brother conceived the idea of trying to ride him down, and began to run cunning, gaining all he could at every swerve the antelope made."

But I must describe the remainder of this remarkable chase in his own words, as noted in his journal.

"After the first two miles I gained upon him rapidly. The antelope went less collected, his gallop lost its springy bound, and he began to turn short, his flanks heaving like a pair of bellows.

"I now felt that if I did not blow my horse I must kill him. Merlin was still fresh, and although his tail shook a little, he felt strong under me, and his stroke was nearly as quick as ever.

"Two to one against the buck! His tongue 'is out, and his tail wagging.'

"I took a hard pull at my horse's head, drove in the spurs, and pressing the antelope to do his best for a few yards further, I fairly burst him, and down he went with the spear through his heart.

"I confess I feel proud of my little horse, for having done what is generally considered impossible, and may never be done again; and it would require a long price now to tempt me to part with him. I must have blood for my fast work, and would rather ride a well-bred horse on three legs, than a brute without a heart that you may spur to death in a close-contested run, without getting an additional yard out of him.

"It is in the field that the indomitable courage of the true Arab shows itself; and when you find what the blood of your horse enables him to do, you learn to appreciate that undying spirit which marks the difference between the breeds of India and the Desert.

"Ravenscroft and I examined the buck carefully, but could discover nothing the matter with him, except a slight scar on one knee. He was a fine old buck, in high condition, with twenty-inch horns; and his having been ridden down by a single horse is one of those unaccountable things which seldom happen twice in a lifetime."

From these extracts it will be seen that antelope-shooting, although looked upon as a second-rate sport in India, requires some skill and patience in the sportsman, and is by no means deficient in excitement, particularly when riding must be resorted to to secure your game. The nature of the animal, as well as that of its haunts, and the long ranges at which you are obliged to shoot, render it particularly well adapted for displaying the beauties of the 'grooved barrel' to advantage.

The long, clear, standing shots at antelope on a plain, are the most perfect that can he imagined. The unbroken level, leaving the outline of your mark so clearly defined against the sky—the means you possess of ascertaining the exact range of your shots—the repeated opportunities of retrieving misses —the ever-varying circumstances under which you fire—and the facility afforded by the nature of the ground for riding down and spearing a wounded animal—all tend to render this a most enticing sport, for an enthusiast in rifle-shooting like myself; and yet, with all these advantages, it falls far short, in my estimation, of the exciting sport of deer-stalking in the jungles.

But we have had enough of rifle-shooting for one chapter, and must reserve a description of this noble sport for some future opportunity.

Dharwar, May 15th.—My brother and I were amusing ourselves during the heat of the day by playing a rubber of billiards with the officers in the fort, when a breathless native rushed in, and announced a tiger marked down within a mile of Dharwar.

The news spread like wildfire, and the cantonment presented the appearance of a disturbed nest of hornets. The proximity of the enemy induced every owner of a gun to turn out. Military men and civilians, sportsmen and no

sportsmen, all were under arms in a few minutes; rifles and smooth guns, blunderbusses, old muskets, and even horse-pistols, were put in requisition; and one man, a hair-brained Irishman, who possessed no more deadly weapon, came forth, armed for the fray, with the butt-end of a billiard-cue.

We were soon at the ground, and having disposed ourselves upon trees, and rocks, and other eminences, the beating commenced.

After a great deal of shouting, yelling, beating 'tomtoms,' and other approved methods of rousing a tiger in the absence of an elephant or fireworks, something was observed to move in the gorge where the animal was said to be lying. The thickness of the tangled brushwood and the darkness of the ravine prevented our distinguishing what it was, till a lash of its long tail, in turning round the corner of a den where it had taken refuge, proved it to be not a royal tiger, but a panther. There he was safe enough, although within five yards of twenty guns, for he clung to the shelter of the cave, and his growling alone marked his position.

It was in vain that the excited beaters pelted, and shouted, and overwhelmed him with abuse, calling him "the son of an unchaste mother;" "spitting on his beard;" "defiling his father's grave," and daring him for an "unclean Kaffer," to come forth and "eat bullets;" he was proof against foul language, and could not be induced to quit his stronghold.

Our patience was wellnigh exhausted, and the more pacific members of the party were for abandoning the enterprise, and leaving the sulky brute alone; others proposed sending off for fireworks; almost every one had a different plan to propose, when my brother, ever foremost in danger, cut the matter short by springing from the tree on which he was seated, and announcing his determination of descending

into the ravine and shooting the panther in his den. We, of course, remonstrated loudly against so foolhardy an attempt, and made use of every argument we could think of, to dissuade him from his purpose, but in vain.

Before I could descend a tree at some distance and reach the spot, he had snatched a sword from one of the beaters to clear his way through the tangled brushwood, and disappeared in the gloomy ravine.

I could distinctly hear the low savage growl of the panther, and a certain impatient switching of the tail, which I too well knew denoted an inclination to charge. I was debating with myself whether I should best serve my brother by following him into the ravine, or by remaining above to cover him with my fire in the event of the animal springing upon him, when a terrific roar was heard, followed by a shot discharged in the bed of the ravine, and, through a cloud of smoke, the panther sprang out so close to me as almost to knock me down; while in the act of staggering backwards I discharged both barrels of my rifle, but without effect.

By the time the panther had cleared the bushes, he was so directly in the line of our horses and horsekeepers, that no one could fire without running a great risk of hitting them; he was therefore allowed to go upwards of a hundred yards before a shot was discharged.

Then came a tremendous volley, and a shower of bullets knocked up the dust on every side of him; but the panther appeared untouched, and was bounding along with undiminished speed—now fully 200 yards distant—when a single shot was discharged from behind me, and he rolled over, tearing up the earth with his teeth and claws.

How shall I describe my joy and gratitude when, on turning round to ask who had fired the successful shot, I

confronted my brother, whom I had given up for lost, standing like one risen from the dead, and grasping his discharged rifle, while a smile of triumph played round his pale but firm lips.

There was no time for words. A look, a warm pressure of the hand, assured me that all was well, and we rushed forward to despatch the wounded panther. The ball had passed through his loins, completely paralyzing his hind-quarters, so that although he still presented a formidable appearance, and made frantic efforts to reach us, he was no longer dangerous. He was accordingly quickly despatched, receiving his last blow from the knight of the billiard-cue!!

We had now time to hear my brother's account of his escape, and providential indeed it was. On descending into the ravine, he immediately discovered the panther's cave, the entrance to which was raised several feet above the ground, so as to be almost on a level with his head. He could hear the brute growling; but his eyes, dazzled by the glare of light above, had not yet become sufficiently accustomed to the darkness to distinguish objects, when the panther, uttering a roar, sprang out in his face. He instinctively threw himself backwards to avoid the stroke of his paw, discharging one barrel of his rifle as he fell. The panther flew over him like a flash of lightning, and dashed up the opposite bank. And my brother, immediately recovering himself, scrambled out of the ravine just in time to administer the fatal shot before the brute was out of reach.

So much for good nerve, presence of mind, and coolness in the hour of danger.

It was with grateful hearts, and after having returned fervent thanks to the Almighty, that we retired that night to rest.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BANKS OF THE BLACK RIVER.

Dharwar, April 5th.—I HAVE this morning made the acquaintance of a remarkable character. Allow me to introduce him.

I was sitting in the verandah after breakfast, smoking a cheroot, admiring a magnificent bison's head which hung over the doorway, and longing to have a day fixed for our expedition to the great western forest, where I hoped to earn a similar trophy for myself, when a strange, wild figure, armed with a matchlock of unusual length, entered the gate of the 'compound,'* and advanced towards me at an easy sling-trot, keeping his eyes fixed upon the ground, and instead of following the path, swerving to the right and left, as if seeking for something he had lost.

His wild air and strange motions led me to suspect he was deranged, and my suspicions were not diminished, when on catching a glimpse of Ravenscroft's tame deer, the trail of which the old savage had, from the force of habit, been following up —he uttered a wild whoop, levelled his matchlock as if about to fire, then with a low, chuckling laugh, recovered the weapon, threw it across his shoulder, where he balanced it without the assistance of his hands, and stepping up to me with a broad grin, extended his long skinny paw in token of friendship.

We had exchanged civilities—for my savage friend was

* The enclosed piece of ornamental ground surrounding a gentleman's house in India is called a 'compound;' from the Portuguese word 'Campao.'

remarkably courteous in his manner—and were trying, but in vain, to make ourselves intelligible to each other, when Elliot, who happened to enter the verandah, sprang forward with an exclamation of joyful recognition, and shaking the old man cordially by the hand, introduced him to me as his particular friend, "Kamah, the Jagheerdar."*

This then was the renowned Kamah—the bloodhound of the western forest; that prince of trackers, of whose fame I had heard so much, and whose exploits had formed the subject of my waking dreams for the last month; and it was with feelings very much akin to those I experienced on first beholding our immortal 'Iron Duke,' that I now gazed on the swarthy features and eagle eye of this great general of the wilderness.

While the stark old hunter was engaged in earnest conversation with Elliot, I had a good opportunity of scanning his figure and accoutrements. He was a tall, wiry man, apparently about sixty years of age, and looked as if hard exercise and constant exposure to a tropical sun had completely dried up the juices and softer particles of his frame, leaving nothing but bone, sinew, and muscle. His step had all the freedom and elasticity of youth; and there was an air of dignity about the old man, a stateliness of carriage, and a look of proud self-possession in his piercing eye, that marked him at once for a free denizen of the forest—one of nature's aristocracy.

His dress and accoutrements were quite in keeping with his general appearance: a greasy skullcap, which had once boasted a variety of gaudy colours, covered his woolly pate, now grizzled by age; a narrow strip of cotton cloth passed between his legs, and fastened to a girdle round his loins, was

* 'Jagheerdar'—a petty prince; a nickname bestowed by us on old Kamah, as head of the Seedee tribe, and prince of the Western Forest.

the only piece of dress exclusively devoted to purposes of decency. But a coarse blanket, or 'cumbley,' of goat's hair, was thrown jauntily across his left shoulder, partly for effect, and partly to be used in case of wet weather, or to serve as a protection against the dew when sleeping in the open air. On his left side was suspended a pouch of dressed leopard-skin, containing his bullets, tobacco, and materials for striking a light; and on the right he carried his powder-flask, formed of the shell of a small cocoa-nut, covered with antelope skin, and secured by a wooden stopper. A venerable-looking match-lock, richly ornamented with brass, a small hatchet, and a well-worn creese thrust into his belt, completed his accoutrements. But what struck me most forcibly in his appearance, was the decidedly African cast of his features, and the woolly texture of his hair—peculiarities unknown among the native tribes of India.

This was afterwards explained by Elliot, who informed me that Kamah was in reality an African, or 'Seedee,' one of a remarkable tribe, inhabiting the Western Forest; and said to be descended from runaway African slaves who fled from the early Portuguese settlers at Goa, and established a little colony in the heart of the jungles, where they continue to support themselves by hunting and rearing a few tame buffaloes.

The arrival of old Kamah was ever hailed as a joyful event by the young civilians; and on this occasion, his report of bison and deer swarming in the jungles was even more tempting than usual.

It was forthwith determined to start for Dandilly to-morrow. The Jagheerdar was dismissed loaded with little presents, among which a bottle of brandy was not forgotten; a meeting was appointed on the banks of the Black River, and orders issued for an immediate march.

Fort of Hullyal, April 6th.—The tents and camp-equipage having been despatched overnight, our party, consisting of three young civilians, my brother, and myself, started after lunch, and rode the first stage to Hullyal, a small mud fort on the outskirts of the forest.

I shall never forget the feelings of joyful excitement with which I mounted my favourite horse, 'Challenger,' and rode forth upon my first jungle campaign. Each horseman was armed with a rifle slung at his back, a hunting-knife thrust into his belt, and a hog-spear carried in the right hand; and thus accoutred we rode through the cantonment in military order, performing, like wild Indians, an incantation to ensure success in the chase, by chanting in chorus a favourite hunting-song, to which we kept time by clashing our spear-heads together.

Nothing worthy of notice occurred during the march, and shortly after sunset we reached our halting-place. Here we found Lieutenant Hood, of the Bombay Native Infantry, who, in consequence of the country being in a disturbed state, has been detached to this wild spot, in command of a small party of Sepoys.

Poor fellow! I pity him; for in addition to the weary monotony of his life—which he must feel doubly irksome, from not being a sportsman—he has had several attacks of ague, and I can see by his pallid cheek and wasted frame, that the unwholesome air of the jungles is slowly but surely doing its work. If he is kept here—and he expects to be kept—during the unhealthy season, when the demon of malaria spreads his pestilential wings over the woodland districts, the chances are that he, as well as the greater part of his detachment, will become food for the hungry jackals, which are at this moment filling the midnight air with their dismal wailings. But such

are the chances of a soldier's life in India, and it is in vain for him to repine at his lot ; so, like a sensible fellow, Hood makes the best of it, and whiles away the weary hours with a few well-thumbed books, and a cracked flute which, as mine outraged ears can testify,

Discourses most *execrable* music.

Hunting-camp on the banks of the Black River, April 7th.— We started from Hullyal at daybreak, accompanied by poor Hood, who, although no sportsman, appeared delighted to join our party, for the sake of enjoying a few days' social intercourse with his fellow-beings. After riding a few miles through low brushwood, which gradually increased in height as we advanced, we at length found ourselves fairly enveloped in the deep gloom of the eternal forest. And well do I remember the feelings of boyish delight, almost amounting to rapture, with which I gazed upon the dark wilderness of trees, and felt that now the dreams of my childhood were realized.

From my earliest youth the description of an uninhabited forest possessed the greatest charm for me. I never read or heard of one that my heart did not yearn to explore its inmost recesses. The desire to do so became a sort of monomania ; it haunted me in my dreams ; and often when wandering through the fragrant birch woods of my native land, towards the close of an autumn day, have I magnified the humble brushwood into gigantic oaks and stately pines, and fancied myself a lone hunter, about to be benighted in the wilds of some far distant clime. But ever and anon, a silly-looking, black-faced sheep, plentifully besmeared with tar, to render him as much as possible out of keeping with my imaginary wilderness, would cross my path—the inharmonious whistle of a small herd-boy would grate upon my ear, or a most

commonplace cottage, with a few half-naked urchins dabbling in the pool of stagnant water in front of the door, would obtrude itself upon my sight, and I returned home disgusted with civilized life, to pay the penalty of indulging my romantic propensities, to the neglect of my lessons, by undergoing, at the hands of a very unromantic tutor, the still less romantic punishment of being flagellated with a pair of leathern taws.

But a whole bull's hide cut up into taws, and wielded by a whole regiment of dominies, could not have flogged out of me my innate love for a forester's life; and now that my cherished visions were realized, the feeling returned upon me with redoubled force. I felt that I was a man—that the field of adventure was open to me—I felt the inexpressible delight of beholding nature face to face—primitive nature in all her unadorned loveliness. I revelled in the idea of perfect solitude—of wandering unrestrained through the noble vistas of the primeval forest, and walking victorious amidst its savage inhabitants. I longed to grapple with some formidable antagonist—to lead a charge of cavalry—to be placed, in short, in any situation in which I might give vent to my excited feelings; and driving the spurs into my horse's flanks, I dashed wildly forward, brandishing my spear and shouting like a lunatic—or a fool, sage reader, if you prefer the word. But, smile as you may, those were happy days; and, unlike many other happy days, have left no sting behind; for to this hour I look back upon my first visit to the forest, as one of the bright spots in my existence.

A ride of some fifteen miles through beautiful forest scenery brought us to our halting place on the banks of the Black River, where we found our tents pitched, a substantial breakfast prepared, and the Jagheerdar, with his son, and two

other men of his tribe established in a temporary hut; his own village being eight miles distant.

I was much struck with the beauty of the spot selected for our encampment. It was a natural lawn of the smoothest turf, sloping down to the edge of a noble river, studded with wooded islands, and surrounded by heavy forest jungle. The summits of the distant Ghauts, which here and there showed above the tree-tops, were the only landmarks; all else was a pathless wilderness, where none but a forest-born savage could hope to find his way.

While sitting at breakfast, we were alarmed by hearing cries of distress proceeding from the Jagheerdar's hut, and on running out to ascertain the cause, we found old Kamah in a furious state of excitement, his left hand firmly fixed in the woolly pate of the hopeful scion of his house, and belabouring him soundly with a stout bamboo. We enquired what crime young Mohadeen had been guilty of, to bring upon himself such a storm of parental indignation, and learned to our astonishment that it was all owing to his having killed a tiger!

One of his father's tame buffaloes having been killed by a tiger on the previous day, the young savage had watched for him during the night and shot him from a tree, when he returned to feed upon the carcass.

This, most people would have considered a very gallant and meritorious exploit on the part of a lad of fifteen; but the old forester was of a different opinion.

"It was all very well," he said, "for us who lived in the open country to wage war with tigers; but with him, who lived on sociable terms with them in the jungle, the case was different.

"I have no quarrel with the tigers! I never injured one of them—they never injured me—and, while there was peace

between us, I went among them without fear of danger. But now that this young rascal has picked a quarrel, and commenced hostilities, there is no saying where the feud will end!"

And for this breach of good fellowship between the family of Kamah and his feline neighbours, the unfortunate youngster was being beaten to a mummy.

We remained under cover during the heat of the day, and, in the cool of the evening, Bruce and I, accompanied by old Kamah, strolled into the forest for a couple of hours, while my brother and Ravenscroft, under the guidance of the woolly-headed youth, explored the woods in an opposite direction.

We had no great expectation of finding game in our immediate neighbourhood, after the noise and bustle occasioned by pitching the camp, and were strolling along carelessly, admiring the scenery and enjoying the delightful coolness of the evening breeze, when old Kamah suddenly stopped, motioned to us to keep silence, and, after listening for a moment, pointed significantly towards a thick clump of bamboo, beyond which we could now hear a slight rustling sound, as if some animal were cropping the branches.

We crept forward with the utmost caution, and separating when we reached the thicket of bamboo, proceeded to get round it on opposite sides.

I had not yet advanced far enough to see the game we were approaching, when I heard the report of Bruce's rifle, followed by a crash, as if a squadron of cavalry were charging through the forest. Next moment I emerged from the thicket, and found myself on the edge of a large open glade, in the centre of which a female bison lay struggling, and tearing up the earth in the frantic efforts she made to regain her footing. I

instinctively drew my hunting-knife, and rushed forward to despatch her. It was in vain that Bruce shouted to me to hold back, for he knew the animal was only hit in the flank, and might get up again; in the excitement of the moment I was deaf to his cries, and getting close up behind the shoulder of the wounded bison, so that she could neither strike with her head nor her feet, I drove the knife up to the hilt in her side. She instantly sprung to her feet with a convulsive bound, uttering a roar that might be heard for miles. But the knife had reached her heart—this was the last effort of expiring nature—her knees bent slowly under her, and she dropped dead at my feet.

I was wiping my hunting-knife, and admiring the gigantic proportions of the noble animal, when I was startled by a warning whoop from the Jagheerdar; and, on turning round, I beheld the old bull of the herd, who had returned on hearing the bellowing of the cow, in the very act of charging through the thicket of underwood which surrounded the open space. Bruce shouted to me to make for the shelter of a tree; but a single glance sufficed to shew me that his advice came too late. The bull was already within thirty paces of me, and the nearest tree was fifty. Turning, with the coolness of despair, I took a steady aim at his forehead and fired; he staggered forward, and, uttering a deep growl, dropped upon his knees, with a stream of blood pouring down his nose. Without waiting to see anything further, I took to my heels, and made for the nearest tree; but before I could reach it, the bull had recovered himself, and turning round, staggered back into the thicket.

As soon as we had reloaded our rifles, we went after him, expecting to find him dead; but although we followed up the trail as long as there was light enough to distinguish the drops

of blood which marked it, we never saw more of him, nor did we find any place where he had lain down. We supposed that the bullet had flattened against his skull, which in the bull bison is fully two inches thick ; or what is more probable, from the quantity of blood lost, it had struck rather low, and entered the head without touching the brain.

Our unexpected success is hailed as a propitious omen, and we expect good sport to-morrow.

Elliot, being senior sportsman of the party, has adopted me as his pupil in woodcraft, and availed himself of the opportunity, while we were smoking our cheroots after dinner, to give me some useful hints. Among other things, he particularly cautioned me against bullying the Jagheerdar, or giving him brandy, for which he has an inordinate liking.

"For," continued Elliot, "he becomes a thorough savage when excited either by ardent spirits, or his own evil passions ; and on such occasions is rather given to the use of lethal weapons. In proof of this, I shall relate an anecdote of him which occurred during my last visit to the jungles :

"The Colonel of a British regiment* accompanied me, and brought with him an English servant to look after his guns and horses. The Englishman had picked up enough of the native language to make himself understood, and the Jagheerdar and he were at first sworn friends and boon companions. But, on one occasion, I imprudently gave them some brandy to regale themselves after a hard day's work. They sat late and drank deep, and, having quarrelled over their cups, old Kamah instinctively drew his knife ; but, before he could use it, was felled to the earth by a well-directed blow between the eyes,

* The late Colonel Henry Thomas, C. B., commanding H. M. 30th Regiment, then stationed at Belgaum ; an excellent sportsman, a most agreeable companion, and a staunch friend.—W. E.

and disarmed. The crafty savage, finding himself inferior in physical strength to his more muscular antagonist, affected to yield to him with a good grace; and by next morning the open-hearted Englishman had half-forgotten and quite forgiven the savage conduct of his swarthy friend, to whom he returned the knife, with a good-humoured laugh at the old fellow's swollen face and half-closed eyes. Not so Kamah. The insult offered to his African features rankled in his breast, and he thirsted for revenge. We had arranged on that day to drive the jungles for game, and the Englishman volunteered to assist as a beater. In the midst of the beat, he heard the report of a matchlock behind him, and a bullet, whistling close to his ear, lodged in the stem of a tree within an inch of his head.

"'Too near to be pleasant!' thought he, as he started up with a round oath, and shouted to the invisible marksman to 'mind his eye.' At the same moment old Kamah stepped from behind a bush within fifty yards of where he stood, and coming up to him with a broad grin, extended his hand in the most friendly manner, telling him at the same time, as if it were a capital joke, that it was *he* who fired the shot in revenge for the blow he had received the night before; but was now satisfied the Englishman was either a 'Swamy,'* or bore a charmed life, for that he had never before missed so fair a mark; and humbly begged leave to shake hands and make friends with so gifted an individual. Honest John could not see the force of this reasoning; neither did he at all relish the joke which appeared to tickle old Kamah's fancy so much. But thinking it safer to have him for a friend than a foe, particularly in thick cover, he at last agreed to shake hands; and considering it unworthy of an Englishman to bear

* 'Swamy,' a god.

malice, was from that time forth on as friendly terms as ever with the Jagheerdar. But I have ever since been on my guard with the old savage; and never allow him a drop of his favourite liquor as long as I remain in his neighbourhood."

Hunting camp, April 8th.—On awaking this morning, the first sounds that reached my ear were the shrill crowing of the jungle-cock, and the belling of the beautiful spotted deer. A herd of the latter, hardly out of range from the door of my tent, were gambolling on the yellow sands of the river; the young does capering about with their tails erect, starting skittishly at the fall of a leaf, and chasing each other in shortening circles around a fine old buck, who stood in sulky gravity, like a Turkish Effendi, surrounded by the fair inmates of his harem. A push of his sweeping antlers against the nearest skylarker, stopped their game at romps, and they all trotted off into the jungle, whither they were followed by my brother, under the guidance of the Jagheerdar's hopeful son Mohadeen, a youth who trod in his father's footsteps, and almost rivalled him in his love for brandy and hunting.

"He," the old man remarked, with a contemptuous smile, "does very well in deer-stalking; but you, 'Sahib,' wish to kill a bison, and must follow the Jagheerdar, in whose hands the wild bulls are as sucking calves! Inshalla, I have said it!!"

Having delivered this modest opinion of his own skill in woodcraft, the old fellow inhaled two or three vigorous whiffs from his 'kalioon,' slowly and pompously expelled the smoke through his nostrils, and throwing his blanket over his shoulder, he grasped his long matchlock, and strode off into the jungle without another word.

To one who has never wandered through the depths of an

Indian forest, I can hardly hope to convey even a faint idea of my feelings, when, for the first time, with nerves braced by the fresh morning air, and a mind screwed up to the highest pitch of excitement by the prospect of the noble sport in which I was about to engage, I followed my silent guide amidst stately forest trees, decorated with festoons of pepper-vine and wild jessamine; treading under foot the rarest hothouse plants; and filling the air with perfume arising from the crushed leaves of cinnamon and camphor laurels. The plants themselves, and the rich perfume they exhaled, were so intimately associated in my mind with ideas of refinement and luxury, that I almost started at the sight of my own barbarous accoutrements; and could hardly realize the idea that, instead of strolling through pleasure-grounds, I was following a savage child of nature into the stronghold of still more savage beasts. But these feelings speedily gave place to that thrilling sensation of proud independence, that glorious consciousness of unbounded freedom, which can only be experienced amidst such scenes as this. I felt as though "my veins ran lightning;" and I verily believe that, at that moment, I might have been induced to exchange all the luxuries of civilized society for the free life of a savage.

As we penetrated deeper into the woods, the forest appeared alive with birds, calling in every variety of key, from the harsh scream of the hornbill, to the glad notes of the brilliant mina of the Ghauts, as he smoothed his ruffled plumage previous to taking his morning flight; while the large gray monkeys, peculiar to this district, alternately chattered and raised that unearthly howl, which sounded in my ears like the voice of evil spirits, and which Coleridge (I believe) says, can only be compared to "the mingled din of iron bars rattling up Fleet Street, the wailing of a hundred

bagpipes played at once, and the silly laughter of a group of drunken men."

The number of footmarks of all sizes, from the light print of the dwarf musk-deer to the heavy tread of the stately bison, satisfied me there was no lack of large game; and old Kamah, staunch as a bloodhound in hitting off a trail, was soon hot upon a fresh track. This he followed up for several miles, and in profound silence; when, thrusting his foot into some fresh droppings to ascertain by their warmth how far the game might be ahead, he dropped upon his knees and applied his ear close to the ground.

After listening with an air of intense anxiety which gradually relaxed into a grim smile, he started to his feet, and tapping me on the shoulder, pointed towards a clump of bamboos within a hundred and fifty yards of us. He now threw off his blanket, loosened his knife in the sheath, and began to creep forward on his hands and knees, I following close behind with a beating heart, and limbs trembling with excitement. After advancing about fifty yards he stopped behind the stem of a large tree, and pulling me towards him whispered that the game was in sight. At first I could see nothing, although I perceived that the branches moved by sudden jerks as if some large animal were cropping them; but, after watching for a few minutes, the muzzle and broad forehead of a bison appeared through the leaves.

He was an old, solitary bull, with splendid horns; and the glimpse I had of his head showed him to be one of the largest size. I was about to raise the rifle, when my guide whispered not to fire till I could see his shoulder, and we remained quietly within eighty yards of him till he took one step forward. Then was the moment; just as his fore-leg appeared I took him in the point of the shoulder, with a bullet weighing

an ounce and a half, and the enormous brute sank with a crash that levelled the bamboos as if an elephant had fallen. He lay apparently dead while I reloaded; but the moment I stepped from behind the tree he started up with a roar that made the earth tremble, and tried to steady himself for a charge. His tongue lolling out of his mouth, and his blood-shot eye rolling with the fury of madness, lent to his enormous head an expression of indescribable ferocity. But a single glance satisfied me the poor brute was not in a state to prove dangerous, for his fore-leg hung dangling from the shoulder, and the foam which besmeared his mouth was deeply tinged with blood. He made one frantic effort to reach us, but fell before he got half-way. I planted a ball in his forehead which effectually stunned him (although I afterwards found it had flattened upon his massive skull without penetrating), and advancing close to where he lay, I discharged the remaining barrel into the back of his neck where the skull joins the spine. This of course proved fatal. He stretched out his limbs with a convulsive shudder, his eyes turned in their sockets, and the mighty bull was no more. This was a solitary bull which, like a 'rogue elephant,' is generally a savage, dangerous animal, and charges without provocation.

"'Shabash, sahib, shabash!'"* exclaimed the Jagheerdar, stroking his chin complacently, and nodding to me as he walked round the fallen bison, and examined the shot-holes with the eye of a connoisseur; "the young sahib has made the 'koolga'† eat some good bullets. He will be a great hunter! I have said it."

Having delivered this opinion with the air of one from whose decision there was no appeal, the Jagheerdar seated

* Well done, my lord, well done! † Native name for bison.

himself upon the trunk of a fallen tree, pulled out his flint and steel, lighted a cheroot formed of dry tobacco rolled up in a green leaf, and puffed away in dignified silence. Exhausted as I was by heat and excitement, and dripping with perspiration, I thought I could not do better than follow his example; and there we sat side by side, with the dead bison at our feet, a couple of hungry vultures, which had already been attracted by the smell of blood, wheeling round our heads, and the sunbeams which struggled through the dense foliage, lighting up the wild group with a depth of colouring that rendered it worthy of the pencil of Salvator Rosa.

Having finished our cheroots, and cut off the tuft of the bull's tail to produce as a voucher on my return to camp, we began to retrace our steps; for we were at least five miles from home, and the sun was becoming powerful. To any one but a native of the woods it would have proved a difficult, or rather a hopeless, experiment to attempt finding his way out of this wilderness of trees. But the sagacious savage, as if guided by some unerring instinct, pursued his onward course without doubt or difficulty; occasionally marking a tree, or tying a knot in the long grass to guide him back to the spot where the bison lay.

On our way home we walked up three 'sambar,' all solitary stags, without getting a shot; for having by this time laid up in thick cover, it was impossible to approach them unheard. The old savage became quite disgusted, and, for the first time in his life, I believe, was trudging on without keeping a look-out ahead, when I, who followed close at his heels, observed a line of bison moving slowly towards us, and grazing as they went. A single rash step might have spoilt all. To seize old Kamah by the shoulder and drag him to the ground was the work of an instant, and there

he lay on his back motionless as a corpse, chuckling with inward satisfaction as he saw the herd approach. The fact of my having first discovered the game had evidently raised me immeasurably in his estimation, and a grim smile lighted up his swarthy features as he patted my head with parental tenderness.

Being in the midst of an open 'midan,'* without a tree or bush to screen us, I was obliged to trust entirely to the colour of my dress, and a little scanty grass for concealment, and crouching down I waited to receive the approaching herd. The wind was fortunately in the right direction, and on they came, unsuspicious of danger, till within fifty yards of us. I fired at the leading cow, at the moment the old bull behind gave the signal of alarm. She fell to the first barrel, and the remainder of the herd, excited to madness by the sight of her blood, came charging down upon us, snorting and bellowing with rage. It was a nervous moment; but old Kamah, who knew the nature of the animal well, laid his hand upon me to keep me down, and raising his head above the grass uttered a yell so unearthly, so fiend-like, that I could hardly believe it proceeded from human lungs. The wild herd turned, as if a thunderbolt had fallen among them, and we could hear them crashing through the branches in their mad career, as they fled far into the forest.

"The wild bulls tremble at the voice of the Jagheerdar," said the old man, regarding me with a peculiar leer, and indulging in low chuckling laughter.

"It was enough to frighten the devil," I replied, in all sincerity.

The poor cow lay kicking on the ground, disabled by a

* In the forest jungles of India you occasionally come upon open spaces, or clearings, free of trees, but clothed with rich grass; these are called 'midans,' and are the favourite feeding-grounds for deer, bison, etc.

broken shoulder-blade. She made an attempt to charge, as soon as our motion discovered us; but could only get upon her knees, in which position I lodged a ball between her eyes, that put her at once out of pain.

I had thus, in one morning, procured a male and female specimen of one of the finest animals in India, and was elated in proportion to my success. It makes me smile, even now, when I recall to mind the bantam-cock strut, the don't-talk-to-me sort of air, with which I swaggered into camp on that eventful morning—the dignified manner with which, on being asked, "What sport, youngster?" I pulled out my two tails, and threw them on the breakfast-table, without deigning to utter a word; but with a look that clearly implied, "Do you call that nothing?" and the patronising smile—the look of proud superiority — with which I acceded to poor Hood's modest request, that as he did not aspire to earn trophies for himself, he might be allowed to keep the precious tufts as a memento—I felt assured—of the memorable morning on which he had enjoyed the honour of sitting at the same table with the man who had killed two bison before breakfast. In short, I verily believe that, at that moment, the whole wide world did not contain a more vain-glorious, self-sufficient, conceited young whelp than your humble servant.

My brother succeeded in killing the old buck of the herd, which he had followed; and Elliot brought home a wild-boar. The others had fired several shots, but returned without any game.

As soon as we had finished breakfast, the whole party sallied forth to examine the dead bison, piloted by the Jagheerdar, and accompanied by a party of 'coolies' to carry home the heads.

Having taken exact measurements of the animals, made a rough sketch of them, and noted down their peculiarities—according to the directions of Elliot, who is a zealous naturalist, and has kindly adopted me as a pupil—we proceeded to decapitate our victims. This was no easy task; but after half-an-hour's chopping with hatchets and hunting-knives, we managed to accomplish it. The heads, together with as much of the meat as the natives thought worth carrying home, were slung upon bamboos, and despatched into camp; and the day being now far advanced, we branched off in various directions to look for game on our way home. I was this time accompanied by young Mohadeen; and old Kamah took my brother under his wing.

I met with several herds of spotted deer and sambar, but the thickness of the cover rendered it impossible to get a shot at them. The slightest rustle alarmed the deer before they became visible; then came a crash through the bamboos; and a momentary glimpse of their brown hides as they bounded away was all we got, after creeping on their trail for miles. After a long fag through this sort of jungle, we came to a deep ravine, where the grass had sprung up to the height of eight feet. This, my guide informed me, was a favourite haunt of the old solitary stags, who retire at this season to secluded spots while their horns are in velvet. The earnest cawing of some crows, hovering over a shady spot, attracted the attention of my guide; and, after watching their motions for a few seconds, he pronounced, with an air of decision, that either a tiger, a solitary bull, or a stag was lying there, probably one of the two latter, as the monkeys overhead were not chattering with alarm, as they generally do when a tiger is in the neighbourhood.

He was right. We crept silently to the edge of the

ravine and looked down. A noble stag was lying stretched on his side by a pool of water, lazily brushing off the flies with his sweeping antlers, and flapping his long ears in indolent security. He was within eighty yards, and his shoulder beautifully exposed, so I took him as he lay, and hit him in the fatal spot. He rose slowly, looked wildly around him, staggered forward a few paces, with the life-blood gushing from his side, and dropped dead.

The young savage proceeded to break the deer, upon the spot, in a most workmanlike manner ; and having deposited the heart and other Abyssinian dainties in the ample folds of his blanket, we left the carcass to be brought home next morning, and made the best of our way into camp ; for it was becoming dusk, and the ground we had to traverse was of a rather tigerish character.

This stag was an old and rather large 'sambar:' he measured in height, from heel to shoulder, fourteen hands three inches, or within one inch of five feet, and the beam of his horn, immediately above the burr, was ten inches in circumference.

My brother shot a bison, which he lost in rather a remarkable manner—but I must tell the story in his own words :—

"We soon hit upon a fresh trail. After following it up for some time, Kamah suddenly halted, listened for a moment, and turning to me with that peculiar grin which always denotes game at hand, whispered that the herd was close to us, drinking in the bed of a ravine, which hid them from our sight. We crept up to the bank, and there they were, a noble herd of at least fifteen, stooping over the stream. Their size appeared enormous, as they stood without a bough to conceal their gigantic proportions. Head after head dipped into the muddy water, and their small, fierce eyes often met

mine, unconscious of impending danger, as I watched them from the top of the bank, where I lay concealed. Alone, at the distance of a hundred yards, stood the old bull, on a rising ground, ever and anon snuffing the air, and looking anxiously towards us. At last he smelt danger, and gave the signal of alarm by stamping violently on the ground. In an instant every head was raised, with distended nostrils, snorting to discover from whence an enemy was approaching. At this moment I fired—the foremost cow staggered to the ground, and the sharp crack of the rifle was followed by a crash like thunder, as the startled herd dashed through the jungle, bearing down everything before their enormous strength.

"'Give her another shot,' said the Jagheerdar, as the wounded cow recovered herself, and slowly followed the others, marking with many a crimson drop each tottering step she took.

"'Well, hand me the spare gun!'

"Alas, there was no gun to hand! My 'peon,' who carried not only the spare gun, but all the ammunition, had loitered behind; and missing us for a moment in this trackless forest was to lose us for good.

"There still remained a chance. The wounded bison might fall, without requiring another shot; and we followed her up with great caution, keeping out of sight behind the trees till we saw her join the herd, which was drawn up ready for a charge, and headed by the old bull. It was now too dangerous, unarmed as we were, to approach nearer. The wounded cow was leaning against a tree for support, and surrounded by the herd, who pawed the ground and snorted with rage at the sight of her blood. We therefore retreated with all expedition, old Kamah being well aware of what would happen if once they caught sight of us.

"We were now about eight miles from camp, and when half-way home we met my stray 'peon,' who had completely lost himself, and appeared very unhappy at the prospect of spending a night in the jungle."

So ended my first day in the forest. A tiger roared round the tents all night, to the great alarm of our horses, but fortunately none of them broke loose, and the light of our camp fires prevented the brute from carrying off any of our bullocks.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BANKS OF THE BLACK RIVER.

Hunting-camp on the banks of the Kallah-nuddy or Black River, April 9th.—I CROSSED the river this morning in a canoe, accompanied by young Mohadeen, who carried my spare gun. We soon came upon fresh tracks of spotted deer, which we followed up for about a mile, guided occasionally by the short barking cry of these animals. On reaching a thick clump of bamboo, some dark object appeared indistinctly among the green leaves. We dropped behind the trunk of a fallen tree and watched. The outline became more distinct, and then a fine buck was visible, lazily rubbing his horns against the smooth bark of a bamboo. The young males of the herd, and a few does, to whom he appeared to leave the charge of his safety, were at some distance, but began to show symptoms of alarm as I raised my rifle.

"Take him behind the shoulder," whispered my attendant. But as the buck stood directly facing me, I took a steady aim at his chest, and fired. I fancied I heard the ball tell, with that peculiar soft 'thud' which indicates a deadly shot; but I might have been deceived by the echo of the woods. The report of the rifle was answered by a crash, and the pattering of a hundred hoofs, as the startled herd dashed into the thickest cover, their dappled hides glancing, like meteors, through the tangled brushwood. We went up to examine the spot where the buck had stood. No venison! and, what

was still more remarkable, no blood!—and yet at seventy yards, which I ascertained to be the distance, I could hardly persuade myself that I had missed.

"Goolee mar khyah, Sahib!"* exclaimed Mohadeen, with a confident air, after he had carefully examined the surrounding bushes.

The sagacious savage had ascertained, after a close scrutiny, that the bullet had not divided a single twig, and therefore, notwithstanding the absence of blood—which he was well aware does not always flow from a gunshot wound—had come to the conclusion that it must have lodged in the body of the deer.

There was sound reasoning in this, and we accordingly followed up the trail. Mohadeen gave a grunt of satisfaction when he found the largest footprints turning off from those of the herd; and when he observed the marks prolonged into deep irregular furrows, as if the animal had staggered from weakness, he began to feel for his knife, and grinned like a laughing hyæna. A few drops of frothy blood now made us certain that the wounded buck was not far off. A choking, gurgling sound caught my ear; and, on running up to the thicket whence it proceeded, we found the buck kicking in the last agonies. The ball had entered his chest, and lodged near the tail. The young savage sprang upon the dying animal like a panther, lest he should expire before the necessary operation of drawing blood had been performed, and muttering a short prayer, plunged the knife into his throat. A very few drops of blood flowed from the wound, but these were sufficient to satisfy the conscience of my friend Mohadeen, who was evidently an admirer of fat venison; and, as he

* Literally—*He has eaten a bullet, my lord*—a common mode of expressing that an animal is wounded.

handled the plump haunch of the buck, he remarked, with an air of great self-complaisance, that the flesh was now 'hulal.'*

After breaking the deer, and taking a landmark by which to find him, we left the banks of the river, and struck into the teak forest, where we expected to find bison and sambar. Three hinds of the latter species, with their calves, crossed our path, uttering their deep trumpet-like note of alarm; but these I spared, much to the astonishment of my savage guide, who had no idea of allowing anything eatable to escape. We also saw a herd of spotted deer feeding in an open plain, where it was impossible to approach them, but did not fall in with any bison. This was probably owing to want of skill on the part of my guide—his father, old Kamah, being the only man of the tribe on whom one can place implicit reliance, in tracking up this very wary animal.

We returned to the tents by ten o'clock, after a long and rapid walk.

On entering the mess-tent, I found the party seated at breakfast, and laughing immoderately at poor Hood, who was giving them an account of his morning's adventures. He declared he had slain a bison, and was almost beside himself with excitement.

His description of his first essay in woodcraft was so good that I must give it, as nearly as possible, in his own words; but shall first attempt to convey some idea of our hero's personal appearance; for, without this, the story would lose half its zest.

The reader will remember that Hood was the unfortunate subaltern, in command of a native detachment, whom we

* Lawful to be eaten. The Mahometans, and other Indian tribes, are forbidden to eat the flesh of any animal that has not been prayed over and bled by one of their own caste.

picked up at the half-ruined fort on the outskirts of the forest. He was a tall, slender youth, with weak legs, lank sandy hair, and a sodden complexion, rendered almost cadaverous by a recent attack of tertian ague. His manner was quiet and gentlemanlike enough, poor fellow, and he was evidently 'a good creature.' But that was all. He had no spark of fire in his composition—there was no soul in his large lack-lustre blue eyes—no expression, save that of habitual wonder, and, like most simpletons, he was always wondering. In short, he was one of those uninteresting, milk-and-water young gentlemen, who, without the slightest knowledge of, or even taste for music, are inveterately addicted to playing upon, or rather blowing into, a flute, to the grievous detriment of their own lungs, and the auditory nerves of their neighbours ; and who, you can see at a glance, have been reared in the small back-garden of a town residence, among tame rabbits and pouter pigeons. He had arrayed himself for the occasion—in humble imitation, no doubt, of a Der Freischutz jäger—in an old dress-jacket of the Scottish archers (to which corps he informed us he had the honour of belonging), with green worsted wings, and a silver arrow embroidered on the collar ; a pair of snowy white trousers, and a fantastic cap, decorated with a black ostrich feather ; and thus accoutred, with a small bugle dangling from his shoulder, a gimcrack French rifle (the stock of which terminated in an elaborately carved boar's head with mother-of-pearl eyes) slung at his back, and followed by my 'maty-boy,' Heels, brandishing the tail of some animal of the ox species—he had been found, on the return of the sportsmen, strutting about the woods in the neighbourhood of the camp, and screeching like a jay the hunting chorus in 'Der Freischutz,' fancying himself, no doubt, the very beau ideal of 'a forester bold.'

Such was the figure which I found holding forth as I entered the mess-tent; and the contrast he presented to his sunburnt, weather-beaten companions in their hunting-dress of brown fustian, and long deer-skin leggings, formed as fine an illustration of the real, and the melodramatic 'forester bold,' as can well be imagined.

But we must let our jäger tell his own story.

"After you had all left the camp, it occurred to me that it was very stupid work remaining alone in the tents, and Campbell's boy, Heels, having informed me that he knew something of 'shikar,' and could shew me plenty of game, I resolved to put myself under his guidance, and try if I could not bring in some spoil as well as my neighbours. I accordingly got out my rifle, and mounted my jäger's dress—all right, you see, bugle-horn and all!"—here he cast a complaisant glance at his own figure—"and sallied forth, accompanied by my friend Heels. By Jove! Campbell, he is a splendid fellow, that Heels; a rum un to look at but a devil to go; I wonder you do not make him your sporting 'peon' instead of a 'maty-boy;' I found him a first-rate hunter, and he has a soul above cleaning boots and shoes, depend upon it."

Here we all burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter, and Heels, who was standing behind my chair, drinking in with greedy ears the praises bestowed upon him, turned upon his heel, and walked out of the tent with an air of offended dignity.

"You may laugh, gentlemen," said Hood, resuming his narrative; "but such is the case: and so you will find by the sequel. Well, as I was saying, Heels and I started, and plunged at once into the forest; but Heels being a stranger in these parts, adopted the very proper caution of not venturing out of hearing of the tents, lest we should lose ourselves,

and indeed there was no occasion for going further, as we almost immediately found ourselves in the midst of game. The trees swarmed with minas and woodpeckers, of the most beautiful plumage, and we observed several splendid jungle-fowl running among the bushes. But the former offered too small a mark for a rifle—although with a shot gun I might have had glorious sport—and the latter were so rapid in their movements that I found it impossible to take a steady aim at them. We therefore proceeded onwards in search of nobler game, and were soon rewarded by discovering a troop of monkeys regaling themselves upon wild figs—(hear, hear). We stalked them with the utmost caution, Heels displaying wonderful sagacity in accomplishing this difficult manœuvre —(hear, hear, and laughter)—till at length we found ourselves within fifty yards of our game. I took a steady aim at the largest monkey, and, I have no doubt, hit him; for he screamed and chattered in a most extraordinary manner. But Heels informs me that these animals are remarkably tenacious of life, and seldom fall at the first shot—(bravo, Heels).

"Well, I was reloading with the utmost haste, for the monkeys were bounding about from tree to tree, screaming in a very threatening manner, and I thought they might be preparing for a simultaneous attack, when Heels, with a shout of triumph, announced that he had discovered the fresh track of a bison—(hear, hear).

"There it was, sure enough, and no mistake!—a deeply-indented footmark, evidently not half-an-hour old. I shall never forget my mingled feelings on beholding, for the first time, such palpable evidence of being in the immediate vicinity of one of these formidable animals. My first impulse, I confess, was to return to camp and await your return, before

embarking in the desperate adventure of following up the trail; and Heels, who appeared rather nervous at the sight of the huge foot-prints, immediately agreed to this measure. But after a little further consultation, it occurred to us, that by so doing, we should make ourselves the laughing-stock of the whole camp; whereas by following up the trail very cautiously, we might at least obtain a sight of the formidable animal, without running any foolish risk by attacking him—(hear, hear). My curiosity, and the spirit of adventure which began to rise within me, prevailed; and we determined to make the experiment—(bravo, Jäger!—go on). The ground being soft after the rain of last night, we were enabled to follow the track without difficulty; and had not gone more than three hundred yards, when, on reaching the edge of a thicket which bordered an open space, clothed with rich herbage, we discovered the object of our search feeding within *ten yards* of us! The shock I received on finding myself thus suddenly within reach of the ferocious creature, made me feel as if I had been electrified. The nerves of the boldest will sometimes give way under such a trial—(hear, hear). I dropped upon my knees, and crouched behind the nearest tree, against which I was obliged to lean for support; while Heels, throwing himself flat upon the ground, buried his head in the grass.—He has great presence of mind has Heels! I had just begun to breathe more freely, and Heels, who had crept close to my side, was urging me to fly at once from a scene of such imminent danger, when the animal, which had hitherto been feeding quietly, raised his head, looked us full in the face, and bellowed!—(hear, hear, hear). The time for action had arrived—we were discovered, and nothing but a stout heart and a steady hand could now save us—(up guards and at them!—Hurrah!) I instantly pitched forward my rifle and fired.

The monster uttered a deep groan, and sank to the ground, kicking convulsively. I instantly reloaded, fired into him again, and continued to do so as long as any signs of life remained—(hear, hear). At last he ceased to move, we ventured to approach him, and there lay my formidable antagonist stone dead, and literally riddled with bullets."—(Bravo, Jäger!—great cheering and clapping of hands.)

"No mistake upon that subject, sir," he continued, as he saw an incredulous smile playing round Elliot's lips; "for here is his tail!"—(roars of laughter).

So saying, he pulled from his pocket a dirty, mangy, tuft of hair, threw it upon the table, and leaning back in his chair began to rub his hands with an air of conscious triumph.

The uncontrollable burst of merriment which accompanied poor Hood's hard-won trophy, as it was handed round the table, had hardly subsided, when a half-naked bullock-driver, followed by a crowd of clamorous natives, rushed into the tent, and falling on his knees before Elliot, craved justice at his hands.

"What is your complaint, my man?" asked Elliot, struggling to suppress a smile, for he guessed how matters stood.

"Justice, my lord! justice!" sobbed the poor fellow. "Some son of an unchaste mother has killed my best bullock, and I am a ruined man. I turned him out this morning to graze in the woods, and on going to look for him just now I found him cold and stiff, with his body full of holes, and *his tail cut off*."

This completed the chain of presumptive evidence against poor Hood, and the laughter was redoubled.

But who can describe the scene of quizzing and merriment that ensued? Suffice it to say that poor Hood was glad to stop the mouth of the injured bullock-driver by paying twice

the value of the unfortunate bullock, whose similarity in colour to a bison had doomed him to a premature death; and that, from that day forth, the 'bold Jäger' contented himself with singing 'Der Freischutz,' and 'A forester's life for me,' without making any further experiments in the practical study of woodcraft.

I devoted the morning to skinning and cleaning my bisons' heads, which I afterwards sunk in the river, to undergo a further polishing by the animalculæ which swarm in all tropical waters.

In the afternoon, when the heat had somewhat abated, we took another ramble in the forest. Young Mohadeen led me a long round through a part of the jungle which had not yet been disturbed. The traces of bison soon began to appear, and we got upon the trail of a herd so fresh, that they could not have passed many minutes. Mohadeen started off with the eagerness of a young hound, and we followed it up, without a check, till the brown hides of a dozen bison, moving in single file along one of their beaten paths, appeared about eighty yards in front. As they were moving off with their hind-quarters towards us, we crouched behind a tree, while my guide, putting his finger in his mouth, gave a loud 'cluck,' like the sound produced by drawing a cork, in hopes of making one of them turn round so as to offer a fair shot.

This time it did not succeed—owing probably to the animals having got the wind of us—and the herd breaking into a trot, I was obliged to take the nearest as he was. Both balls hit, but with little effect, and after a long walk upon the trail, which led us several miles farther from home, we gave it up on finding that the blood had ceased to flow.

While following up this trail, a little animal about the size of a hare, and beautifully marked with white streaks

upon a dark brown ground, started from a bed of dry leaves at the root of a tree, and made off with extraordinary swiftness.

I took a snap-shot as he glanced among the bushes, and, by the merest chance, killed him. On going to pick up what I fancied must be a curious variety of the hare tribe, I was astonished to find that it was a perfect little deer, but without horns, and with sharp canine teeth projecting from the upper jaw, beyond the lips.

I was not at that time sufficiently well versed in natural history to know the name of the animal, but I was aware it must be a valuable specimen. I therefore carried it home with the utmost care; and on my return to camp, was informed by Elliot that it was a remarkably fine specimen of the 'Memina,' or dwarf Indian musk-deer, a rare animal, and one the history of which is but imperfectly known.* I shall give a more minute description of this animal hereafter.

On our way back to the tents, I shot a 'Muntjak' (the rib-faced deer, or Indian roe). A low whistle stopped him as

* The *Moschus Memina*, or pigmy musk, although rare in the plains, is by no means uncommon in the forests bordering the mountainous tracts of India. The distribution of animal life is marked not only by geographical but by topographical limits. Thus, many of the birds and animals of the country south of the Nerbudda are distinct from their congeners of a different species which represent them to the north of that river. In the same manner, the denizens of the forest-tracts are rarely, if ever, found in the plains; and there is a third belt or zone of country called the *malnád*, lying between the forest and the open champaign country, and characterised by low, rocky, gravelly hills and slopes, which is tenanted by certain species seldom found in either of the other two. Thus, the bison and the sambar, the muntjak or rib-faced deer, and the little musk, are confined to the forest; the *Antilope Chikara*, or four-horned antelope, and the gazelle (*Antilope Cora*), prefer the red rocky hills; and the *Antilope Cervicapra*, or typical antelope, the open black plains.—W. E.

he was bounding across our path, and I knocked him over as he stood hesitating. He was an old buck, with well-grown horns, and tusks like a little boar.

Just as daylight was failing us, and while we were still a couple of miles from camp, I observed a troop of monkeys crowded together on a tree, which overhung a clump of long grass, bounding from branch to branch in a state of great agitation, screaming, chattering, and making hideous grimaces, as if half enraged and half terrified at the sight of some object beneath them.

"What is the matter with these monkeys?" I inquired of my guide in Hindostanee.

"It is a tiger, probably," he replied, puffing away at his cheroot, with perfect coolness, and striding along as if it were all a matter of course.

"The devil it is!" said I, thunderstruck at the coolness of the young rascal: for the path we were pursuing being bounded on each side by impenetrable jungle, obliged us to pass within a few yards of the haunted thicket—and cocking both barrels of my rifle, I stepped out at my best pace to escape from the dangerous neighbourhood as quickly as possible.

We had just passed the thicket, and were making a short turn round the end of it; when, to my utter dismay, I found myself face to face, and within twenty yards of a royal tiger, busily engaged in tearing up the carcass of a wild hog he had just killed. My hair almost stood on end, as the brute raised his enormous head, smeared with blood, and glared upon us with his malignant green eyes. Mohadeen dropped his cheroot, and remained motionless as a statue, with his keen eye steadily fixed upon that of the tiger. I knew enough of the nature of the animal to be aware that it was more dangerous

to retreat than to stand fast; but thinking that a charge was now inevitable, I was determined to have "the first word of flyting," as we say in Scotland, and was about to raise my rifle, when Mohadeen, without removing his gaze from the tiger, laid his hand upon my arm, and kept it down with a firm grasp. The tiger growled and shewed his teeth, but unable to withstand the fascination of the human eye, he gradually withdrew the paw, which jealously clutched his prey, crouched together, as if appalled by the steady gaze of the savage, turned slowly round, and uttering a sulky growl, slunk away into the long grass. No sooner was his back turned, than Mohadeen, clapping his hands to his mouth, sent forth that peculiar wild yell, which appears to strike terror to the heart of the most savage animal, and we instantly heard the stealthy tread of the tiger change to a bounding gallop, as he fled in dismay from that unearthly cry.

"We have made him eat dirt," remarked the young savage, coolly picking up his cheroot, replacing it in the corner of his mouth, and walking off as if nothing remarkable had happened.

We now set off towards camp at a round trot, for the short twilight of the tropics was fading rapidly, and my guide, although he affected to despise tigers by daylight, was perfectly aware they were not to be trifled with after nightfall. We reached the tents without further venture; and I confess I was not a little glad when we came in sight of our cheerful camp-fires.

My brother shot a bull bison; and two sambars were brought in by the remainder of the party.

Reader, you have probably spent many a happy hour among your brother officers at the mess-table; you may have shared in the fun and frolic of a hunting-breakfast at Melton,

or you have enjoyed the social glee and brotherly fellowship of a masonic supper. Perhaps, like myself, you have tried them all, and have enjoyed each in their turn: but, unless you have visited 'the Land of the Sun,' you may depend upon it you have yet much to learn. If you wish to see sociability, comfort, and brotherly feeling; if you want to learn what real good living is; and if you appreciate agreeable society, tempered by sobriety and seasoned by wit, you must to the 'greenwood,' with a party of thoroughbred Indian sportsmen; for there will you find them combined and in perfection.

And here I must remark, that by 'thoroughbred,' I mean not only high-couraged and game to the backbone; but well-informed, gentlemanlike, and agreeable, as I am happy to say my present companions are.

I pray you, Friend, to fancy yourself returned from a fatiguing ramble in the forest, hot and dusty, but elate with success; that you have enjoyed a refreshing bath, and that, having exchanged your hunting dress for light linen clothing, and thrust your wearied feet into a pair of embroidered Indian slippers, you are seated in a large airy tent, the canvas walls of which are raised on one side to admit the refreshing breeze. The table is covered with the finest damask, and loaded with goodly viands, intermixed with plate and sparkling crystal. Take, for example, a haunch of venison that would do no discredit to the best park in England; a cold wild boar's head soused in vinegar; wild boar chops, combining the flavour of venison with that of the most delicate pork; a noble venison pasty, over which Friar Tuck would have pronounced a benison with watering lips; stews, curries, and ragouts, composed of every variety of small game, and cunningly devised by Elliot's incomparable *artiste*, the

Portuguese 'babachee;'* marrow-bones of bison and deer, and a dozen other sylvan dainties too numerous to mention. A host of native servants clothed in white muslin, with scarlet turbans and sashes, stand around, watching with anxious looks to anticipate your slightest wish; and in a remote corner you may observe a dusky figure (the high-priest of Bacchus) squatted on his heels, and intent on cooling to the exact pitch some dozen long-necked bottles that conjure up visions of ruby claret and sparkling champagne. The bronzed features of your companions, glowing with healthful excitement, and beaming with good fellowship, smile around the hospitable board. And the gay scene is lighted up by a profusion of wax candles in tall glass shades, to protect them from the gentle breathing of the night air, which, playing round the tent, fans your heated blood into refreshing coolness.

Fancy yourself snugly ensconced in an arm-chair, recounting your own adventures, and listening to those of your brother sportsmen. Fancy the interesting discussions, the comparing of notes and drawings that takes place between the scientific members of the party, and the good-humoured jokes that are bandied among the less learned but lighter-hearted youngsters. Fancy all this, Friend, and say if you can imagine anything more delightful than the mode of life of an Indian hunting party.

"Luxurious dogs!" the reader will probably exclaim.

So we are, sir, after the labours of the day are ended—"and what for no?" as my friend Macphee would say. We work for our good living, sir, and we work *upon* it too; for I can assure you that the man who sleeps in a comfortable tent, with a good dinner and a bottle of good claret under his belt, will shoot better, ride better, and stand hard work better, than

* 'Babachee,' a cook.

the unfortunate devil who has bivouacked at the foot of a tree, after filling his stomach with half-broiled venison and muddy water. I say this advisedly, having tried both plans. And trust me, Friend, our Indian method of doing Robin Hood is the correct one. But, mind you, it is only in a rich civilian's camp that you thus fare sumptuously every day. We poor subalterns have to rough it pretty well, when we go hunting, 'on our own hook'—so we make the most of it when we get into such good quarters as we have here.

After dinner we adjourn to the outside of the tent, to sip our coffee and smoke our hookahs; and retire at an early hour, with cool heads, to ensure steady nerves in the morning.

I witnessed this evening a curious method of hunting practised by the natives, which I must attempt to describe.

We were sitting in front of the tent after dinner, the happy camp-followers—happy, because idle and gorged with venison—had sung themselves to sleep, and deep silence brooded over the woods, save when the whine of a panther, or the distant roar of a wandering tiger, was borne on the night wind from the deepest recesses of the forest; or the sullen plunge of an alligator was more distinctly heard in the neighbouring river.

The moon had not yet risen; and the landscape was shrouded in darkness, except in our immediate neighbourhood, where the bickering light of our camp-fire fell upon the corpse-like figures of the sleeping natives, swathed in their white robes; and lighted up with picturesque effect the gnarled stem and spreading boughs of a stately teak-tree, from which were suspended the carcases of several deer, the grim head of a bull bison, and other trophies of the chase.

No one spoke: for each and all of us experienced that delightful sensation of perfect repose, that luxurious lassi-

tude, which can only be experienced by one who has braved the almost intolerable glare of an Indian sun, and can only be enjoyed under the serene sky, and amidst the balmy freshness of an Indian night.

I was fast sinking into a dreamy reverie, now tracing fantastic shapes in the light wreaths of vapour which curled upwards from my glowing 'chillum,' and now contrasting the air of comfort and elegance presented by the interior of our gaily-lighted tent, with the deep gloom of the surrounding forest, when I was startled by hearing the distant sound of a bell; and on looking in the direction from whence it proceeded, I discovered, far back in the woods, a brilliant light flitting among the trees.

I immediately called Elliot's attention to this unusual appearance.

"It is some poaching fellows from the village," he replied, "blazing deer. I wish they would keep nearer home, and not destroy the game in the neighbourhood of our camp."

"Blazing deer!" I exclaimed, "and to the sound of a bell? This is surely a strange style of hunting!"

"Have you never heard of it before?" asked Elliot.

"Never," I replied.

"Then it is well worth seeing, arrant poaching though it be: and if you do not mind the trouble of slipping on your boots and shooting-jacket, we may have a look at these fellows before we go to bed."

I was delighted to avail myself of Elliot's offer, and guided by the light and the sound of the bell, we soon overtook two natives busily engaged in their nocturnal sport. One of them carried in his hand a bell, which he kept constantly ringing, and on his head was fastened a small brazier filled with glowing charcoal. In the deep gloom of the

forest he presented the wildest and most fantastic appearance that can be imagined; and brought vividly to my recollection the descriptions I have read of the mad enthusiast, Solomon Eagle, who made himself so conspicuous during the great plague in London. His companion, an active, wiry little savage, with an eye like a lynx, was merely armed with a heavy curved weapon—something between a cook's chopping-knife and a sword—as sharp as a razor, and commonly known in India as a Coorg-knife.

Being both inhabitants of the Jagheerdar's village, and personally known to Elliot, they were much flattered by our proposal to join in their sport; and we had soon an opportunity of witnessing their skill in this very curious method of hunting.

The man who carries the fire and the bell moves slowly and cautiously through the thickets, ringing as he goes; while his companion follows close behind him, keeping a sharp look-out ahead. The deer, alarmed by the sound of the bell, start from their hiding-places; but, bewildered, and apparently fascinated by the glare of the burning charcoal—which dazzles their sight, and prevents them from distinguishing the forms of the hunters—they approach the object of their wonder, as if under the influence of a spell. The light reflected from their staring eyeballs discovers their presence to the hunters. Solomon Eagle comes to a halt, and ceases to ring his bell; while his active companion, stealing round the bewildered animals, attacks them in the rear, and with his formidable Coorg-knife, hamstrings as many as he can reach, before they become aware of their danger, and fly from the treacherous light.

In this manner we saw three deer destroyed within an hour; and our poaching friends would, no doubt, have done

further execution, had we not bribed them to discontinue their sport, by inviting them to return to camp, and partake of a glass of their favourite brandy.

April 11th.—The game in the neighbourhood of our camp having become wild and scarce, we struck our tents this morning, and moved on to old Kamah's village, some miles further back in the forest. When about halfway, we were met by a deputation of natives, who informed us, with bitter lamentations, that they were on their way to crave our assistance in destroying a gigantic snake, which had lately made his appearance in that part of the forest; and had, within the last few days, killed and eaten *two of their bullocks.*

This story sounded so very improbable, that we rejected it with scorn, and abused the unfortunate villagers for attempting to impose upon us. But the poor fellows asserted the truth of their report with so much earnestness, and were so urgent with us to assist them, that, partly from good-nature, and partly from curiosity, we consented to accompany them in their search for the monster. This proved fruitless, although we explored many miles of forest; and, during the few days we remained near the village, we never could obtain further tidings of this father of snakes.

But I must acknowledge that, during our search, we came upon traces which puzzled the most skilful huntsmen of the party, and somewhat staggered our incredulity.

While exploring a thicket on the edge of a hollow, which during the rains had been a pond of water, but which was now nearly dried up, one of the natives uttered a triumphant shout, and calling us around him, pointed to the hollow, and requested that we would now believe our own senses, for there was the track of the snake. There remained no doubt as to the existence of a track, and a very curious track; for,

in the half-dried mud, a deep furrow was distinctly traced extending from side to side, as if a large hogshead had been dragged across it in a tortuous course, like the track of a snake. And if this really was the track of the snake, as the natives asserted it to be, their account of his enormous powers can hardly have been exaggerated, for he must have measured at least seventy or eighty feet in length, and if so, could easily have killed and swallowed a bullock.*

But was it the track of a snake?—that was the question. No one could account in a satisfactory manner for the appearance of the mysterious furrow; and yet no one would acknowledge that he believed in the existence of a snake enormous enough to have produced it. Neither shall I venture to do so; but shall leave the sagacious reader to draw his own conclusions from the above facts; merely remarking that I could see no motive for the natives attempting to deceive us.

I never myself met with a living snake above eighteen feet in length; but I am aware that they grow to a much

* There is no doubt that the *Python Molurus* (or Indian Boa, as it is generally though incorrectly called) attains to an enormous size; and the one referred to by the author, the existence of which was well known to the inhabitants of the Black River valley, though seldom seen, was a reptile of the largest dimensions. The late Sir Mark Cubbon used to relate an account he received from a perfectly credible witness, of a huge serpent killed in Cundapoor, which had gorged a cow bison, and was rendered so lethargic by the process of digesting this enormous meal, that he was unable to retire to his safe haunts, and was thus discovered and easily dispatched. Another very large snake was shot many years ago in Wynád, by Captain Croker of H. M. 80th Regiment, a well-known sportsman, whose feats are still traditionally handed down in Mysore. That the track referred to by Col. C. was that of the Kala Naddi Python there can be no doubt. I have seen it more than once, and often tried to persuade the natives to guide me to its lair. But they held it in such superstitious dread and veneration, that no reward or persuasion would induce them to approach it.—W. E.

greater size. I once saw (in the museum at Cape Town, I think,) the skin and perfect skeleton of a boa-constrictor, said to have been brought from India, which measured thirty-five feet in length; and I am not sure we should be justified in denying, that in the unexplored forests of the East, reptiles may be found of even double this magnitude, although we do not at present possess any satisfactory proof of their existence.

April 13*th*.—Elliot, being anxious to shew me as much as possible of Indian sporting, gave orders for a grand beat to take place this morning, in the Oriental style. Messengers were dispatched yesterday, to collect as many men as possible from the neighbouring villages; and to-day we commenced work, after breakfast, with two hundred beaters in line, taking a circle of forest, about a mile in diameter, at each beat. The natives are very fond of this style of sport, and engage in it with the utmost spirit. The hunters best acquainted with the forest select the passes where the guns are to be posted. At each pass a light screen of branches is erected, and behind this the sportsman crouches, and remains perfectly still till the game is driven up to him. Unless closely pressed by the beaters, the animals generally come up at a slow pace, carefully reconnoitring the ground as they advance, and thus afford an easy shot. But if a deer happens to dash past at a great pace, a whistle or a clap of the hand will generally make him stop for an instant to listen, and then is the moment for the grooved barrel to send its hissing ball with fatal precision.

I had a running shot at a stag before the first beat was arranged. He started up before me as I was going to my post, and passed within forty yards; but I missed him with both barrels.

In the first beat nothing came near me, except a 'muntjak,' or rib-faced deer, which I shot. I, however, heard a good deal of firing on both flanks, and the roaring of some animal, which I took to be a tiger. When the beat was over, I found that none of the European sportsmen, except Ravenscroft and myself, had got a shot; Ravenscroft had fired at a wild boar, which he only wounded slightly. The animal charged him, and knocked him over, but fortunately without ripping him badly; the destruction of a pair of new cords, and a slight wound on the outside of the thigh, being the only injury he sustained. A herd of bison, and a couple of bears—whose roaring I mistook for that of a tiger—had also been started; but had either turned back, or broken out at the flanks, where the native hunters, armed with matchlocks, were stationed. Several shots had been fired at the bison, and two or three were said to have been mortally wounded, but nothing was bagged. The bears charged through the line of beaters, and broke back.

The next beat proved blank, although plenty of game was seen.

In the third beat, a fine stag sambar came up to my pass, and gave me a beautiful shot—I hit him with both barrels in the throat. He stood tottering, uncertain whether to fall or not, till my peon went up to dispatch him with the hunting-knife; when he charged, with his mane erect, and attacked the man so savagely, that I was obliged to fire again to drop him. He stood four feet five inches at the shoulder, and had fine antlers. My brother also shot a young stag, and this was all that was done in a long day's work.

Having now seen the far-famed beating of the Great Western Forest, I am inclined to think it very inferior sport to stalking your game. There is certainly a good deal of ex-

citement—there is something fine in the "pomp and circumstance" of the thing—and when you do get a shot, it is, in general, a deadly one. But for my taste, give me the excitement and exercise of following up a trail; the well-contested struggle between man's reason and the unerring instinct of the brute; and the satisfaction of bringing down your game at a long range, when you feel that the victory has been obtained by your own skill in woodcraft. I am told, however, that this day's sport has been a very unfavourable specimen of beating. The grass is at this season too high, and the underwood so dense, that it is utterly impossible for the beaters to preserve regularity in their line, and thus the game is enabled to break back.

April 14th.—To-day we made another attempt at driving. A strong body of beaters took the field, headed by old Kamah, and armed with all the instruments for producing hideous sounds ever invented in this land of discord; the traces of bison and deer were recent and numerous, and the knowing ones predicted a successful day's sport.

During the first beat, including about a mile of jungle, a large herd of bison, and an old solitary bull, were driven up. The solitaire alone passed within shot of our line, the others having broken back before they reached the flankers, placed to hem in those which were going wide of our guns. Ravenscroft had a good shot at the bull; and I saw, by his action, as he rushed past my post, that he was severely wounded; but the ball had struck too far back to stop him. His hind-quarters, turned towards me in his retreat, received the contents of both barrels of my large rifle; but the enormous brute never even staggered, and we heard him forcing his way through the bamboo with a crash like thunder, till the sound died away in the distance.

The second beat only produced a few stray bison and a solitary stag, none of which came within shot of our line.

During the third beat I climbed into a high tree, so as to command an extensive view. A herd of bison were started, and I had a fine opportunity of studying their habits as they came up in front of the beaters.

As the wild yells, mingled with the rattle of 'tomtoms,' and the braying of trumpets, came echoing through the forest, the wild herd, snorting with alarm, dashed aside the boughs; lowering their heads, and clearing a passage through the tangled underwood that closed again behind them, and left no traces of their course. They would then halt and listen, with ears erect and expanded nostrils, till the yell of their pursuers again came swelling on the breeze; and again they thundered onwards to the silent enclosure, where the sportsmen lay concealed behind their fence of green leaves. The herd was making direct for a pass defended by three guns; and I expected every moment to hear a volley poured into them, when a stupid fellow, leaving his post just at the critical moment, spoilt everything.

The bison, hearing a rustle directly in their path, and fearing this hidden danger more than all the noise behind them, drew up in a body, wheeled round, and rushed back like a whirlwind, sweeping everything before them in their headlong course.

Thus ended a second day's work without producing a single head of game.

April 15th.—The bad success of the last two days, 'with all appliances and means to boot,' has disappointed us not a little. Old Kamah still talks confidently of success, twirls his moustache, and damns the beaters for sons of unchaste mothers—while he works his long skinny fingers with convul-

sive twitches, as if he longed to clutch the luckless knave who yesterday deranged a beat planned with his utmost skill in woodcraft.

To-day, at Kamah's urgent request, we tried fresh ground several miles further back in the forest, a beautiful green spot in a valley, watered by numerous springs. Two beats failed to produce a single hoof, although plenty of game was started. The third—a forlorn hope—was tried in despair. And this time I determined to adopt my own plan of operation.

Old Kamah having placed us in what he considered the most likely passes, the beat commenced. But, trusting to the experience of wild animals which I had acquired in deer-stalking, I resolved to follow my own bent; and accordingly slipped quietly away from the post assigned me, to a small valley, which, from its appearance, I fancied must be a frequented pass, and which, if it proved to be so, would lead any animal which might be driven up, quite wide of our proposed line.

One rule violated, I went further; and, to the utter disgust of my attendant 'Seedee'—who had lived in the forest for fifty years, without ever having seen such an atrocity committed—I declined to use his fence of green leaves, and took up my position on the branch of a tree, some ten or fifteen feet from the ground.*

* The advantage to the sportsman of an elevated position cannot be doubted, not only for the reason given in the text, but because it presents a wider field of view, and affords earlier notice of the approach of game.

Wild animals, moreover, not only smell danger—they see it, they hear it. The quickness of the senses of beasts of chase, and the readiness with which they detect an unusual sight or sound, is very remarkable. But there is one peculiarity in the exercise of their watchfulness They never, unless specially attracted, look up. Their experience has been derived from dangers on foot; and their vigilance is therefore directed to objects on their own level. Hence the advantage of a post on a tree.

From what I had observed of the nature of wild animals, both at home and in India, I was convinced that game coming up to a pass frequently discover, by their sense of smell,

The following instances illustrate these habits :—

On one occasion, whilst shooting small game, in a sparsely-wooded nullah, near Hookairy, in the Kolapoor country, with the late George C., the author's brother (the most warm-hearted and affectionate of friends, the keenest and pluckiest of sportsmen), we came unexpectedly on a tiger. The beaters were instantly sent down, double quick, to cut off its retreat from the low country; whilst George and I, each with a single attendant, ran to the head of the ravine, leaving orders to drive the tiger up. Near the top the nullah divided into two branches, and then ceased; the intervening space to the summit of the ridge, distant about 100 yards, being quite bare. Each guarded one of the branches, selecting the largest bush that offered, for there were no trees. My post was in a *karonda* bush (*Carissa karondas*), about 7 or 8 feet high; and when I got on the top of it, kneeling on the shikári's blanket, with him holding a spare gun, our united weight brought us still lower. The tiger was soon on foot, and the luck was mine. It came up my branch, passing within 10 or 12 yards, but so close that I was afraid to fire, lest it should turn to the shot and charge. I therefore let it pass, and fired just as it crowned the crest of the ridge. I knew from the sound that the ball had struck; but to my dismay, instead of falling or descending the other side, the brute wheeled round and rushed back. This time it came directly towards me. A collision seemed inevitable. Keeping perfectly still, and determined not to fire till the last moment, I watched its approach with the most intense anxiety, and saw its eyes glancing hurriedly from side to side. Down it came, brushing the very bush on which we sat, so that I could easily have touched it with my gun. Had it looked up, we could not have escaped; but though, from the inclination of the ground, it had been all the while immediately above us, so that it was hardly possible for it to miss seeing us, it never did. Sending a couple of shots after it, we found it lying dead at the foot of the hill. It was a fine tigress. The first shot had passed through her loins.

Another time, at Kardagee (p. 76), George and I had another impromptu rencontre with a tiger. This time we beat down the nullah, to the place where it opened on the cultivated plain, and where several fine trees offered excellent posts. The beat was long, the day hot, and I had fallen asleep on my perch. A pressure of the arm from my attendant awoke me, and I saw the tiger emerging stealthily from the cover, within 70 or 80 yards. The click of the

objects on their own level, which are not perceptible if raised some distance from the earth. And the experience of the last two days satisfied me that bison scent danger, and avoid it, long before they come in sight.

My worthy savage, seeing me resolved to abandon the beaten path of his forefathers, would not be witness to such a gross violation of established custom; and after assuring me that nothing could or would come near me, he threw his blanket over his shoulder, and strode away with a look of ineffable scorn.

The beat was nearly over. Nothing had yet been done. And the shouts of the wearied beaters were dying away, when a heavy animal came tramping down the valley; and a fine old bull, with inflated nostrils upturned to the breeze, trotted along the very pass I had selected as the most likely one for an animal to take. He passed within fifty yards of my tree. I lodged a couple of balls in his shoulder, and down he sank upon his knees, with his broad muzzle buried in the earth. In this position the disabled monster lay groaning till I descended from the tree, and lodged a ball in the back of his skull, which finished him. He was the largest bison I have ever seen; his size, when stretched upon his side, appeared enormous. His height, from heel to shoulder, was six feet two inches, and at the highest ridge of the back, six feet six inches.

rifle-lock, although so slight a sound, caught his ear, amid the noonday silence of the jungle, when every creature is at rest. Instantly he stopped short, one foot raised in the act of advancing, and peered cautiously round on every side, but never looked up. So beautiful was the sight that I paused in admiration for several seconds before firing. Then, with a short roar, he bounded high in the air, the blood spouting from his mouth, and disappeared. George, who could see him from his post on the opposite side, shouted, "Dead!" and descending, we found that the ball had gone right through his heart.—W. E.

During the various beats, several traces of wild elephants were seen, but none of these animals shewed themselves. We got back to the tents by seven o'clock, and supped on the marrow-bones of the bison.

I have now had three days' experience of driving game in the jungles, with two hundred beaters and a line of twenty guns—five of them in the hands of European sportsmen—and what is the result? One bison, two sambar, and a rib-faced deer, which is not more than any one of us might have killed in a day's stalking. Beating is all very well where there is no possibility of approaching your game, on account of the thickness of the cover. But there is no doubt that in all places where the timber is large, the grass burnt down, and the underwood tolerably open, far more game may be killed by stalking than by beating. That the former plan is more sportsmanlike and interesting, will, I think, be readily admitted by all, except those lazy fellows who prefer having their game found to seeking for it themselves; and would rather sit quietly under a tree till it is driven up to them, than 'lard the lean earth as they walk along,' in following up a trail.

CHAPTER IX.

A CIVILIAN'S CAMP.

On the day following the great beat described in the last chapter, one of our party was attacked with shivering and other febrile symptoms. This was a broad hint that it was time for us to exchange the close air of the forest for the more salubrious atmosphere of the plains; and, accordingly, the camp was struck next morning, and our march towards home commenced.

On reaching the open country our party broke up. My brother and the two younger civilians, whose leave had nearly expired, were obliged to return direct to Dharwar. But Elliot, having some business to transact in the district, resolved to return by a circuitous route through a part of the country abounding with game; and I, being for the present a free man, gladly accepted his invitation to accompany him.

Elliot, being a civilian of some standing, travels with a retinue becoming his rank; and although our party is now reduced to two, our followers on the line of march still present an imposing appearance. We have three tents—the mess-tent, carried by camels, and two smaller tents, which we use as sleeping apartments, carried by bullocks. Our old elephant, 'Anak,' with his driver, and another attendant, leads the procession. He is followed by four thoroughbred Arab horses, each attended by his groom and grass-cutter, with their wives and children. Then come the camel and

tent bullocks, a squadron of native ponies, or 'tattoos,' loaded with baggage and trophies of the chase; and some dozen 'coolies,' bearing our beds, camp-furniture, and 'cowrie-baskets.' The rear is brought up by a host of native servants, tent-pitchers, and nondescript camp-followers of every age and sex, occasionally intermixed with jugglers, snake-charmers, and dancing-girls, who join us at the various villages, in hopes of being allowed to exhibit at the next halting-place for the amusement of the 'Burrah-sahibs.' And the whole are under the charge of Elliot's two peons or armed followers, who are distinguished from other servants, by wearing an embroidered shoulder-belt with a large silver breastplate. The duties of a peon are very similar to those of a Highland chieftain's henchman of former days; he attends his master on all occasions, carries his spare gun in hunting, scours the country in quest of game, acts as his confidential messenger, and, on approaching a village, runs before him, proclaiming his titles and shouting his praises. He is generally a fine, handsome fellow, and as consequential as a Highland piper.

In the eyes of an European, it must appear strange and even absurd, to see two young men, in weather-stained garments, leather leggings, and battered hunting-caps, moving about the country with such a retinue of followers as I have enumerated. But the customs of the country, the nature of the climate, and the prejudices of the natives, which oblige them to close their doors against all Christians and other Kaffers, render a large number of followers absolutely necessary to ensure anything like comfort on a march in India.

A military man may—and indeed generally does—travel with only a small tent, in which he has hardly room to turn; one horse, a single bullock to carry his baggage, three coolies bearing his bed and cowrie-baskets, and two native servants,

besides the horsekeeper and grass-cutter. But with this—the very smallest number of attendants a traveller can have—he is exposed to many discomforts. He must either accompany his people in their slow march, of some two miles an hour; or if he chooses to ride on to the halting-place, he must sit for several hours under a tree, exposed to heat and dust, the attacks of ants, centipedes, and mosquitoes, and the intrusive curiosity of a host of gaping natives. When his patience is exhausted, he may amuse himself, and improve his already painfully good appetite, by rubbing down and dressing his horse till the baggage arrives; and then he must wait at least another hour before the tent is pitched and breakfast prepared. Add to this, that if his single horse happens to fall lame, he is obliged to trudge along the hot dusty roads on foot; that owing to the scantiness of his baggage, he is unable to carry either wine or beer—the latter being considered almost a necessary of life in India—and is therefore obliged to stint himself to a very small allowance of brandy-and-water, hardly strong enough to kill the animalculæ; and that, in spite of the utmost economy, he sometimes runs short even of this; and you have some of the discomforts resulting from a scanty train of followers.

In the travelling camp of a rich civilian, the case is widely different. Every luxury is there; and in the heart of the jungles you find as many comforts and have as good attendance as you could desire in the best regulated house.

Immediately after dinner our mess-tent is struck, and sent on during the night to the next halting-ground, with a set of servants appointed for this duty. After smoking our hookah and sipping our coffee, we retire, each to his own little tent, where we find a comfortable bed and dressing apparatus prepared. And next morning at daybreak, after another cup

of hot coffee, we mount our horses and canter on to the next stage, where we find a large roomy tent pitched, carpets spread, tables laid out with books and writing-materials, clean clothes and bathing materials prepared, and our well-groomed horses fresh and ready for any work we may have for them during the day.

Having bathed and refreshed ourselves, breakfast is the cry; and, at the word, a host of obsequious natives appear, bearing curries and pillaws, eggs, omelets, dried fish, sardines, and venison cutlets; claret, green tea, and coffee, iced water and fruit, and other luxuries which none but an Indian breakfast can boast. By the time breakfast is finished, and the fragrant hookah discussed, the followers have arrived, and the remainder of the camp is pitched; and thus we move along, by easy stages, enjoying healthful exercise with constant change of scene; and finding everything as comfortable and well arranged as if the tents had never been moved.

Another important advantage of travelling with a civilian is this, that being looked upon in the light of a Rajah, every man, woman, and child in the district is the humble and willing slave of 'His Mightiness.' If he be a sportsman—and few young civilians in India are not—the native huntsmen of the different villages, hearing of his approach, are almost sure to have a tiger, a 'sounder' of wild hog, or some other large game, marked down previous to his arrival; and a word to the obsequious Ameldar ensures the services of every male inhabitant of the village to act as beaters. And so we travel in princely style, receiving homage from the dignitaries of each village, and finding bears, tigers, and wild hog, awaiting our pleasure at almost every stage.

April 20*th*.—We are encamped to-day near a village with an unpronounceable name, fortified with mud walls—after the

manner of Mahratta villages in general—and containing a handsome pagoda.

Elliot, having some business to transact here, was received in his official capacity by the Ameldar and other leading men of the place. Just before we reached the entrance of the village we saw them approaching, mounted on little punchy ponies, smothered in gaudy trappings, and having their tails dyed of a bright pink colour. They were preceded by a band of native musicians, playing upon horns and tomtoms, and other barbarous instruments; and accompanied by servants bearing brazen dishes, filled with fruit and flowers, and a few rupees, intended as the offering, without which no native ever presumes to approach a superior. Half the population of the village followed at their heels, shouting with delight at beholding so grand a spectacle; and altogether, there was noise, dust, and confusion enough to render the procession quite imposing.

On meeting, both parties came to a halt, the music ceased, and the sleek, well-fed Brahmins, dismounting from their equally well-fed steeds, approached Elliot with the most profound salaams; vying with each other in the fervour of their welcomes, and humbly craving his acceptance of their 'unworthy offerings.'

Having politely replied to their high-flown compliments, and laid his hand upon each of their gifts—a ceremony which is considered quite equivalent to accepting them, and when there are rupees in the case, even more satisfactory to the donor—Elliot begged the obsequious functionaries to remount. This, after some remonstrance, and a great many apologies, they were persuaded to do. The two peons ran before their master's horse, proclaiming his titles, shouting his praises, and commanding the populace, on pain of death, to make way for

the 'Burrah-sahib!'—the invincible!—the mirror of justice!—the redresser of wrongs!—the protector of the oppressed!—and the terror of wild beasts and evil-doers!! The musicians again sounded their discordant instruments—the mob rent the air with acclamations—the fat Brahmins nodded their heads approvingly, and grunted forth their assent to each eulogium pronounced by the bawling peons; and, thus escorted, we rode slowly through the dusty bazaar till we made our exit at the opposite gate of the village. Here we found our tent pitched, and Elliot, right glad to escape from the barbarous pageantry and fulsome flattery of an Indian welcome, dismissed his fawning escort, with many civil speeches for their polite attention.

Our first care was to summon Bussapa, the principal hunter of the village—more generally known in this district by his well-earned title of the 'Tiger-slayer.' He is the most noted hunter of the southern Mahratta country, and wears upon his breast several silver medals, rewards given by Government for feats of valour performed in the destruction of notorious tigers. Most of his family have fallen victims to these formidable animals. His last remaining son was killed by one within the last two months, and he himself has made several extraordinary escapes. But his firm belief in predestination makes him blind to all danger; and each succeeding casualty among the members of his family only tends to strengthen the feeling of mortal hatred with which he regards the whole feline race; and renders him more daring in his almost daily encounters with them.

The following anecdote, related by my brother, affords a striking instance of this man's extraordinary presence of mind, and determined courage. I give it as I find it noted in his journal.

"Bussapa, a hunter of the 'Lingyat caste,' with whom I am well acquainted, was sent for, by the headman of a village, to destroy a tiger which had carried off a number of cattle. He came, and having ascertained the brute's usual haunts, fastened a bullock near the edge of a ravine which he frequented, and quietly seated himself beside it, protected only by a small bush. Soon after sunset the tiger appeared, killed the bullock, and was glutting himself with the blood, when Bussapa, thrusting his long matchlock through the bush, fired and wounded him severely. The tiger half rose, but being unable to see his assailant, on account of the intervening bush, dropped again upon his prey with a sullen growl. Bussapa was kneeling within three paces of him completely defenceless; he did not even dare to reload, for he well knew that the slightest movement, on his part, would be the signal for his immediate destruction; his bare knees were pressed upon gravel, but he dared not venture to shift his uneasy position. Ever and anon, the tiger, as he lay with his glaring eyes fixed upon the bush, uttered his hoarse growl of anger; his hot breath absolutely blew upon the cheek of the wretched man, yet still he moved not.

"The pain of his cramped position increased every moment —suspense became almost intolerable; but the motion of a limb, the rustling of a leaf, would have been death. Thus they remained, the man and the tiger, watching each other's motions; but even in this fearful situation, his presence of mind never for a moment forsook the noble fellow. He heard the gong of the village strike each hour of that fearful night, that seemed to him an 'eternity, and yet he lived.' The tormenting mosquitoes swarmed round his face, but he dared not brush them off. That fiendlike eye met his whenever he ventured a glance towards the horrid spell that bound

him; and a hoarse growl grated on the stillness of the night, as a passing breeze stirred the leaves that sheltered him. Hours rolled on, and his powers of endurance were wellnigh exhausted; when, at length, the welcome streaks of light shot up from the eastern horizon. On the approach of day the tiger rose, and stalked away with a sulky pace to a thicket at some distance; and then the stiff and wearied Bussapa felt that he was safe. One would have thought that, after such a night of suffering, he would have been too thankful for his escape, to venture on any further risk. But the valiant Bussapa was not so easily diverted from his purpose: as soon as he had stretched his cramped limbs and restored the checked circulation, he reloaded his matchlock, and coolly proceeded to finish his work. With his match lighted, he advanced close to the tiger, lying ready to receive him, and shot him dead by a ball in the forehead while in the act of charging. If this does not shew courage, nerve, and coolness, I know not what does. Many will, I dare say, doubt the truth of the story—I can only say that I firmly believe it. I heard it from the man's own lips the very day the circumstance occurred; and from his manner of relating the story—from his well-known character for determined bravery—which I have repeatedly seen put to the test—and from other corroborating testimony, I give it full credence."

From Bussapa we learn that the country in this neighbourhood abounds with large game, and that we have arrived at a propitious moment. He has for the last three days been upon the trail of a family of wandering tigers that have killed a number of cattle lately; and he gives us good hopes of being able to mark them down for to-morrow. If any man in the world can do so, Bussapa is the man.

In the afternoon a troop of strolling tumblers, jugglers,

and snake-charmers, came to exhibit their tricks in front of the tent. They were inferior to some I have seen at the Presidency; but several of their feats were new to me, and sufficiently curious.

A man with his legs firmly bound together, and a long straight Mahratta sword lashed to the back of his neck so as to stand upright, threw a summerset backwards and alighted on his feet without allowing the point of the sword to touch the ground. To do this on a sandy soil without any spring-board required some muscle: he then, with a sword and shield in his hands, jumped headforemost through the loop of a rope not more than eighteen inches wide, which was held by two men in a square form as high as their heads, turned over in the air and alighted on his feet, with the sword and shield still in his hands. A boy then climbed to the top of a pole about forty feet high, supported by shrouds descending at an angle of 45°, and having doubled up an antelope's skin and fastened it between his legs to protect him from the friction of the rope, he got astride upon one of the shrouds, let go his hold, and slid down to the bottom with fearful rapidity, holding his arms aloft, and trusting entirely to his balance to keep him upright on his narrow seat: the grace and apparent ease with which he accomplished this difficult feat were truly wonderful. People were of course stationed with a blanket to receive him, and break his fall when he reached the bottom; otherwise the velocity with which he descended was so great that his legs must have been fractured. On examining the antelope-skin which served him for a saddle, I found that it was nearly cut through by the friction of the rope.

The jugglers and snake-charmers exhibited their usual tricks, but did not perform any feat particularly worthy of notice.

While on the subject of snake-charmers, I shall, with the reader's permission, give an extract from a later part of my journal, relating to these curious people.

"We had an argument the other day as to whether the snake-charmers of India extract the fangs of the snakes which they exhibit or not. I myself believe that the fangs are in general extracted; but I can vouch for one instance at least, where one of these men not only exhibited a snake without extracting his fangs, but was at length bitten, and fell a victim to his temerity.

"When I was on General Dalrymple's staff at Trichinopoly, there was a dry well in the garden, which was the favourite haunt of snakes, and in which I shot several. One morning I discovered a large cobra-capella at the bottom of this well basking in the sun; but while I ran to fetch my gun some of the native servants began to pelt him with stones, and drove him into his hole among the brickwork. I therefore sent for the snake-charmers to get him out. Two of these worthies having arrived, we lowered them into the well by means of a rope; one of them (after performing sundry incantations and sprinkling himself and his companion with ashes, prepared from the dung of a sacred cow) began to play a shrill monotonous ditty upon a pipe ornamented with shells, brass rings, and beads; while the other stood on one side of the snake's hole holding a rod furnished at one end with a horse-hair noose.

"At first the snake, who had been considerably bullied before he took refuge in his hole, was deaf to the notes of the charmer; but after half an hour's constant playing the spell began to operate, and the snake was heard to move. In a few minutes more he thrust out his head, the horsehair noose was dexterously slipped over it and drawn tight, and we

hoisted up the men dangling their snake in triumph. Having carried him to an open space of ground, they released him from the noose. The enraged snake immediately made a rush at the bystanders, putting to flight a crowd of native servants who had assembled to witness the sport. The snake-charmer, tapping him on the tail with a switch, induced him to turn upon himself; and at the same moment sounding his pipe, the snake coiled himself up, raised his head, expanded his hood, and appeared about to strike; but, instead of doing so, he remained in the same position, as if fascinated by the music, darting out his slender forked tongue, and following with his head the motion of the man's knee, which he kept moving from side to side within a few inches of him, as if tempting him to bite. No sooner did the music cease than the snake darted forward with such fury that it required great agility on the part of the man to avoid him, and immediately made off as fast as he could go. The sound of the pipe, however, invariably made him stop, and obliged him to remain in an upright position as long as the man continued to play.

"After repeating this experiment several times, we placed a fowl within his reach, which he instantly darted at and bit. The fowl screamed at the moment he was struck, but ran off and began picking among his companions as if nothing had happened. I pulled out my watch, to note how long the venom took to operate.

"In about half a minute the comb and wattles of the fowl began to change from a red to a livid hue, and were soon nearly black, but no other symptom was apparent; in two minutes it began to stagger, was seized with strong convulsions, fell to the ground, and continued to struggle violently till it expired, exactly three minutes and a half after it had

been bitten. On plucking the fowl we found that he had merely been touched on the extreme point of the pinion; the wound, not larger than the puncture of a needle, was surrounded by a livid spot; but the remainder of the body, with the exception of the comb and wattles—which were of a dark livid hue—was of the natural colour; and I afterwards learned that the coachman (a half-caste) had eaten it.

"The charmer now offered to show us his method of catching snakes, and, seizing the reptile (about five feet long) by the point of the tail with his left hand, he slipped the right hand along the body with the swiftness of lightning, and grasping him by the throat with his finger and thumb, held him fast, and forced him to open his jaws and display his poisonous fangs. Having now gratified my curiosity, I proposed that the snake should be destroyed, or at least that his fangs might be extracted—an operation easily performed with a pair of forceps; but the snake being a remarkably fine one, the charmer was unwilling to extract his teeth, as he said the operation sometimes proved fatal; and begged so hard to be allowed to keep him as he was, that I at last suffered him to put him in a basket and carry him off. After this, he frequently brought the snake to the house to exhibit him—and still with his fangs entire, as I ascertained by personal inspection—but so tame that he handled him freely, and apparently without fear of danger.*

* The fangs of poisonous snakes are generally extracted, but others soon grow in their place, and unless constantly removed, the reptile soon becomes as dangerous as ever.

The poison-fang is tubular, with an open slit at the point through which the venom flows, and is not fixed in the jaw, but attached by muscles only to the poison-gland at its base. When at rest, the fang lies back in the gum, and is only protruded in the act of biting. Behind it lies another about half the size of the first; and behind this, four or six more, gradually decreasing in

"On my return to Trichinopoly, after an absence of some weeks, I inquired for my friend the snake-charmer, and learned that he was dead, having been bitten by this identical snake. I afterwards had another snake charmed out of the same well, but took care to put him to death immediately."

As an instance of the extraordinary rapidity with which the venom of the cobra-capella acts upon the human frame, I must here mention an anecdote related to me by an officer in India. His regiment—a native one—was on the line of march one morning before daylight, when a sepoy of his company asked leave to 'fall out,' saying that he had run a thorn into his foot, and that it pained him so much as to make him feel faint. The poor fellow sat down by the road-side ; and, in less than a quarter of an hour, he was a corpse. The surgeon, on examining the body, pronounced the wound in the foot, which the unfortunate man had mistaken for the prick of a thorn, to be the bite of a cobra-capella.

April 22*d.*—While sitting at breakfast this morning, a messenger arrived with the welcome intelligence that the indefatigable Bussapa had marked down four tigers and two bears, and surrounded them in a ravine within six miles of our camp. We immediately mounted old Anak, with a goodly supply of rockets and fireworks in the howdah, and proceeded to the place.

On reaching the ground, we found the gorge closely guarded by some fifty well-armed Mahrattas ; and learned that, just before our arrival, a fight had taken place between a tiger and one of the bears, which had made off to the hills

size to a mere point. When the large tooth is pulled out, as it is liable to be when the snake seizes firm hold of a struggling prey, the next in order takes its place, and speedily grows to its full size. There is no danger to the animal, nor apparently any pain, from extracting these teeth.—W. E.

with a broken head. The others had not moved, and we immediately commenced beating.

The elephant was posted on a bank directly over the pass into one of the deep ravines that divide the hills. This was the tigers' path to and from their stronghold, and our position commanded it in every direction.

After half an hour's tedious suspense, the cry of the beaters came shrilly echoing up the ravine, and signals were made that the tigers were afoot. Every rustle was now watched with breathless anxiety—the heavy tread of some animal was heard approaching.

The elephant trumpeted; and, next moment, from under a tangled mass of creepers, appeared the grisly muzzle of an old bear, taking a precautionary peep before he ventured to expose his whole person. Fortunately for poor Bruin, there was nobler game at hand, else he might not have met with so cool a reception. A hearty malediction, for intruding himself when not wanted, was his only greeting; and away he bundled, with most uncouth activity, down a precipitous bank; completely frightened out of his propriety by a view-holla from old Anak, that made the welkin ring.

Before the bear was out of sight, a tigress, in all the pride of her striped beauty, was gliding by with the stealthy pace of a cat. Two balls were into her before she passed; but she neither winced nor staggered, and disappeared among the bushes without uttering a growl.

By this time the rockets were doing their work at the other end of the ravine. A short angry roar came hoarsely on the breeze, that drove before it a sheet of flame from the ignited grass; and two tigers, with their tails erect, dashed past us at full speed. Each shot was answered by a savage growl, and a hind-leg dangling after him, as the bushes

closed over his shrinking form, shewed that one of them was severely hit. The other escaped untouched, Elliot and I having fired at the same tiger.

Signals having been made that the fourth tiger had broken away across country, we ordered the beaters to retire to places of safety, and went in with the elephant to finish the wounded ones. Close to the bush where she had disappeared, we found the first tigress stretched on her side, in a pool of blood, and quite dead: she was shot through the heart, and must have dropped just as we lost sight of her.

A little further on, the growling of the wounded tiger guided us to a dense thicket of creepers, in which he was lying. Anak set to work in earnest, and tore away with his trunk the tangled mass, till he came upon the tiger's lair. The crippled savage crawled out, grinning with rage, but too weak to charge, and was rolled over by a volley of four barrels. He, however, recovered himself, and, while we reloaded, crawled away to another small clump of bushes, where he lay watching us, till we again went up to him. Game to the last, he rushed out to meet us, and was shot dead directly under the elephant's trunk. As it was near sunset, we thought it too late to follow up the two tigers that had broken away; and returned to the tents, well pleased with our day's sport.

In the evening a party of dancing-girls from the neighbouring pagoda came to exhibit before us. They were pretty graceful creatures, with antelope eyes, and well-turned limbs, richly dressed in silken robes, with a profusion of silver bangles encircling their slender ankles, and wreaths of wild jessamine twined among their dark hair. Their dancing, too, or rather their motion—for the twining of their slender figures, and the waving of their arms, could hardly be called

dancing—were rather graceful; and the exhibition would have been pleasing enough, were it not that they accompanied their movements with a song, the shrill discordant notes of which were perfectly distracting, and made us soon glad to dismiss them.

I have heard some shrill pipes enough among the lasses of my native land; but never have I heard a voice so shrill, so piercing, or so unmusical, as that of an Indian Nautch-girl. Yet the nobles of the east will sit for hours together, listening with delight to their discordant notes; and so depraved is their taste, that I never met with a single native who could appreciate European music. They acknowledge our superiority in most things, but declare that we are centuries behind them in the art of producing sweet sounds.

April 23*d*.—Elliot and I fell in with a 'sounder' of hog this morning, on our way back from a neighbouring village, where he had been to transact some business. We fortunately had our hunters and spears with us, and soon collected a number of country people to drive them out of a field of grain in which they had taken refuge. We let the sounder get well away, in hopes of a boar being left behind in the grain; but none appearing, we laid into the largest sow at a pace that soon brought us alongside of her. Challenger went well, and this being his first trial, pleases me much. He shows great speed, is perfectly temperate, and turns well in a snaffle, which is a qualification of the utmost importance in a hog-hunter. I ought to have taken the first spear easily; but being a novice in the use of the weapon, I missed my thrust, smashed my spear-head among the stones, nearly lost my seat, and was cut out by Elliot on a much slower horse.

We had hardly reached the tents, when we were met by a 'peon,' with the welcome intelligence of a large boar wallowing

in a small lake within half a mile of the tents. Spears and fresh horses were quickly produced, and we had just mounted, when a horseman galloped up, and announced a tiger marked down in the opposite direction. We were now embarrassed with too much good news; but we speedily decided in favour of the tiger; and, in less than an hour, were seated on the back of our trusty friend Anak, and listening to the shouts of the beaters as they drove the tiger towards us. He came up boldly, and was almost abreast of us; when, unfortunately, the elephant trumpeted, and spoilt all. The tiger instantly turned and galloped back, at his best pace, to some impenetrable covert; and the flying shots we sent after him in his retreat only knocked up the gravel about his heels, without doing him any harm. Every attempt to burn him out, or force the elephant in, was equally unavailing, for the bushes were green, and the tangled thicket perfectly impenetrable; and after expending all our fireworks, we were obliged to give in and leave him.

April 25th.—Fortune favoured us to-day, three tigers having been found by the merest chance, when it appeared more than probable that we must return empty handed. Elliot and I rode out at daylight to reconnoitre the country, where our people had been sent the day before to look for tigers. We were holding a consultation with old Bussapa, who was quite in low spirits, having failed in discovering any fresh tracks; and we had just decided on trying new ground, when a tigress, with two well-grown cubs, nearly as large as herself, came down from the hills, and quietly walked into a ravine within a few hundred yards of us.

All was speedily arranged, the elephant posted in a good position, markers placed on every rising ground commanding the ravine; and the beaters drawn up ready to act. The signal

was given. In went a flight of rockets, accompanied by the true 'shikar' yell, and the tigress was afoot, trotting towards us. We let her come up within ten yards, and then, as she stood hesitating whether to charge or turn back upon the beaters, we gave her a volley that sent her down upon her haunches. She instantly rallied, and laid up in one of the strong coverts of the ravine. The two cubs galloped past together, roaring so loud that the elephant became alarmed, and wheeled round at the moment we were about to fire. This disconcerted our aim, and they escaped, one untouched, and the other slightly wounded in the hind-quarter. The wounded cub crept, growling, into the first thick bush he reached, and was marked down by one of the look-out men, and there we left him to his meditations, while we disposed of the old tigress. Little search was required to find her; she came boldly forth to meet us, received our fire, and dashed at the elephant without flinching, although she was severely hit, and was obliged to climb a high bank to reach him. A ball between the eyes dropped her, when in the act of springing on the elephant, and she rolled into the ravine dead.

A storm which had been gathering for hours among the hills, now rolled on in masses of clouds, black as night, and burst over our heads, with a peal of thunder that seemed to shake the earth to its centre. The rain descended in a deluge, such as can only be witnessed in the tropics; and, in less than ten minutes, the dry channel of the 'nullah' had become a foaming torrent, hurrying away the carcass of the dead tigress that, a few minutes before, had been trotting along its hot sandy bed. The whole face of the country was soon a sheet of water, and there was nothing for it but to gallop home before the ravines became impassable. We reached our tents about sunset, more than half-drowned, after a splitting

gallop of eight miles across country, during which I thought myself fortunate in only getting one fall.

The tigress killed to-day was a savage devil, well known in this part of the country, and had destroyed a number of people lately. One of her victims was the son of poor Bussapa. He had fired at and missed her; when she charged, pulled him down from the tree on which he was seated, and carried him off. Her death has occasioned great joy among the country people, and no one glories in her fall more sincerely than old Bussapa.

April 29th.—We left the village with the unpronounceable name three days ago, and have done nothing on the road except frightening a bear, which beat us among the hills.

This morning we found two bears asleep in one of the deep 'nullahs' near the river, or rather they were found for us, and intelligence sent in, just as we were on the point of marching. They were easily started, and came up abreast of each other along a ledge on the face of a steep rock. Elliot and I took one each, and they both dropped at the same moment. The largest—mortally wounded—never moved from the spot, but expired with a long yell, that was returned by a hundred echoes. The other looked at his fallen companion, rose slowly, and before we could snatch up our spare guns, threw himself over the scarped rock, and, putting his head between his hind-legs, rolled like an avalanche into the dark ravine. He reached the bottom just as the beaters arrived at the spot, and immediately charged one of them. But fortunately he was so much exhausted by his wounds, and the rapid descent he had made, that the man he attempted to seize was able, with the assistance of his companions, to beat him off without being bitten, or receiving any other injury than being spattered with blood. In the midst of the mêlée a

panther sprang up, and broke cover at a racing pace. We gave chase, but he beat us, and reached the hills untouched ; and on our return we found that the wounded bear had fought his way through the beaters and escaped. We never found him again.

Gootul, April 31st.—A notorious old man-eating tigress, with four cubs, that has been the terror of the neighbourhood for some months back, was marked down this morning, and almost the whole population of the village turned out to assist in her destruction. As she had the character of extreme ferocity, unusual precautions were taken in beating her up, and volleys of blank cartridge, with flights of rockets, were thrown into every thick place, far in advance of the beaters.

The tigress was soon afoot, and our assistant 'mahout,' who was posted on a tree to look out, held up five fingers to telegraph, while he shook with agitation on beholding the whole royal family passing close under him. On reaching the edge of the cover where we were posted, the tigress left her cubs behind, walked out into the plain, and boldly looked the elephant in the face, laying her ears back, growling savagely, and curling up her whiskered lips with a look of indescribable ferocity. Every hair on her back stood erect, her long tail switched from side to side like that of an enraged cat, and her glowing eyes were fixed upon us with a look of fiendish malignity. I never saw a more perfect representation of an incarnate devil ; and I remained for some seconds, with my rifle poised, studying the magnificent picture which the scene presented, and feeling a sort of reluctance to put an end to it by firing the first shot.

Every tree and rock was crowded with spectators, watching with anxious looks and beating hearts the issue of our contest with their deadly foe. The wild yells of the beaters,

the hissing of the rockets, and the rattle of firearms, had given place to an ominous silence, like that which precedes the outbreak of a hurricane; and no sound was heard, save an occasional low deep growl, which might well be compared to distant thunder that heralds the approaching tempest. The tigress, in the attitude I have described, and our noble elephant, with his trunk carefully coiled up between his tusks, stood face to face, like two combatants who have just entered the lists, and scan each other with jealous looks before venturing to engage in mortal combat.

The elephant took one step forward, and the tigress, uttering a hoarse growl, drew herself together as if about to spring. It was now time to act, and the report of our rifles was answered by an exulting shout from the spectators, as the tigress, hit in the point of the shoulder, rolled over, tearing up the earth with her claws in many a fruitless effort to regain her footing. She at last succeeded in doing so, and slunk back into cover, with one foreleg dangling from the shoulder. This shot decided her fate; and to prevent any accident occurring to mar the sport we anticipated when she was brought to close quarters, we ordered the spectators and beaters to betake themselves to trees, where they would be fairly out of reach.

Anak was now walked into the thicket, but we had hardly proceeded twenty yards, when that harsh grating roar that makes the blood curdle, followed by a despairing shriek, gave us dread warning that some unfortunate beater had disregarded our caution, and fallen a victim to his temerity. A wild cry of rage and execration arose from the assembled multitude, many of whom, from their elevated positions, were enabled to witness the tragedy. But so far from being awed by the fate of their companion, it was with some difficulty

that we prevented them from rushing in, sword in hand, and hewing the tiger to pieces ; although they well knew, in so doing, many lives must have been sacrificed.

Every exertion was now made to hurry the elephant to the spot. The ' mahout ' plied his iron goad, and the sagacious brute crashed his way through the tangled brushwood to the scene of blood. The tigress, enraged by the pain of her wounds, and roused to madness by the taste of blood, rushed out upon three legs, and charged the elephant with determined bravery. Our large friend with the trunk did not like it ; and wheeling round with a scream of alarm, he shuffled off at his best trot, jolting the howdah to such a degree, that we found it impossible to fire, although the tigress was giving chase, open mouth, and close at his haunches. The ' mahout ' at last succeeded in checking his pace to a certain degree, and just as the tigress was about to spring on his croup, I took a snap shot and hit her. This made the savage old devil rather faint, and she lay down to recover her breath. After some trouble, we succeeded in stopping the elephant, and coaxed him into returning to stand another charge. The tigress lay perfectly still till we were within ten yards, when she started up with a loud roar, and made at us more savagely than ever. She had hardly got upon her legs, however, when she was knocked over by a volley from four barrels, and completely doubled up. The elephant, whose nerves appeared to have been shaken by the first charge, again turned tail. On returning after having reloaded, we found the tigress lying with her head between her paws, ready to receive us. We fired at her when in the act of springing on the elephant's trunk, and a lucky shot between the eyes rolled her over dead.

The fall of this noted tigress was hailed with shouts of triumph by the amateurs who had watched the whole proceed-

ing from their perches; and a poor little herd-boy, whose brother had been devoured a few days before by the tigress and her cubs, was the first to descend and exult over the prostrate man-eater.

As the cubs were described as not being larger than a pointer-dog, we commenced a hunt after them on foot, armed with swords; but the little brutes had concealed themselves so effectually, that we could not find them.

The poor little herd-boy, whose brother had been killed, was twice before attacked by this same tigress; but a herd of fine large buffaloes which he tended, headed by a sagacious old bull, came at his call and drove her off. He was close to his brother when she seized him, and actually saw the tigress with her four cubs feeding off the body. Unfortunately, on this occasion, the buffaloes were grazing at some distance; had they heard the boy's cries, or seen the tigress, they would probably have charged and beaten her back; for they had been seen to attack her in a body several times when she ventured into the open plain; and the boy said he never feared a tiger as long as his cattle were near him.

The natives begged to be allowed to carry home the tigress after their own fashion, and she was accordingly handed over to them to be dealt with as they saw fit. Having carefully singed off the whiskers, with various superstitious ceremonies, the body of the tigress, ornamented with garlands of flowers, was placed upright on a cart, drawn by eight bullocks, and in this state was dragged in procession through the village, preceded by a band of native musicians, and followed by a crowd of men, women, and children, exulting over the remains of their deadly foe, and invoking blessing on our heads for having rid them of her dreaded presence.

Killing a tiger is at all times a satisfactory exploit. But

the death of a brute like this, such a pest while living, and so game in her last moments, is indeed a glorious victory. Were it not for the melancholy fate of the unfortunate beater, I should say this is the most satisfactory day's sport I have yet seen in India. An accident of this sort is always a sad damper to one's feelings of triumph; but we have at least the satisfaction of thinking, that it was occasioned entirely by the poor fellow's own imprudence; and that by ridding the country of this dreadful scourge, we have probably been the means of saving many human lives at the expense of one.

In a later part of my journal, I find the following remarks upon the foolhardy courage displayed by natives in tiger-hunting, which, being àpropos to the subject, may with propriety be introduced here.

Natives, in beating for a tiger, become excited in proportion to the increase of their danger, rushing wildly through the jungle, as if running a muck; and frequently throwing themselves into the very jaws of the infuriated animal, in spite of the utmost exertions on the part of the European sportsmen to restrain them. This resolute manner of going to work generally insures the death of the tiger. But too often, in the moment of victory, comes the heart-sickening intelligence that some unfortunate fellow is lying mangled beside him. Nothing can exceed the determined bravery of the natives on such an occasion; death seems to have no terrors for them when a tiger is their game; not even the sight of their companion's dreadful fate can daunt them; and they seem actuated by some inspired feeling that renders them unconscious of fear.

I never could account for this; and have often in vain sought to trace the cause why the man who has for ages submitted to a foreign yoke, who trembles at the frown of an

European, should possess courage enough, voluntarily, to face so fearful a death. There is something inexpressibly terrible in the charge of a tiger. Man appears so defenceless, so utterly helpless, opposed to the gigantic strength of the striped monster, who springs upon him with a force that crushes him like a worm in the dust. I can say, from sad experience, it is a sight, once seen, of which time can never obliterate the remembrance. Yet the timid Hindoo, as he is called, opposes his feeble frame, armed only with a sword and shield, to this most formidable of all animals.

In the southern Mahratta country, I have known several instances of a body of men thus armed, rushing in upon a tiger, and cutting him to pieces; but I never knew one case unattended with a serious loss of human life. When firearms are used, it must be allowed by any one who has ever seen an Indian matchlock, that some determination is required to face a tiger, under any circumstances, with such a miserable weapon. A matchlock is, without exception, the most awkward, ill-constructed engine, for throwing projectiles, that ever was invented. The barrel is from six to seven feet long, seldom quite straight, and enormously top heavy; the stock, disproportionately short, is furnished with a shallow pan to contain the priming, which is protected from wet by a sliding lid, plastered with cow-dung; and a rude trigger, connected with the cock—to which is attached a match of hempen-cord, dipped in saltpetre—completes this primitive weapon.

Thus armed, an European would be hopeless of doing execution. In the first place, the match must be lighted and the pan opened—it is quite a matter of chance whether or not the match ignites the damp priming—and if it does, there is no certainty of its communicating with the charge in the barrel, consisting of a handful of gunpowder, as coarse in the grain

as bay-salt, pounded into a cake by means of an iron ramrod, jammed down with a piece of damp cow-dung, and surmounted by one or more bullets, not cast, but carved or hammered. Add to this, that the weapon has probably been loaded a month; and you will wonder, as I have often done, at any one hoping to make a successful shot with an Indian matchlock. A miss often proves fatal; but the Hindoo, strong in faith, mutters a prayer over his long barrel, and fires at a tiger's head as coolly as if he were aiming at a target. I quote the following ludicrous instance of 'sang froid' on the part of a native hunter, during a lion-hunt in Guzerat, as related by one of the party:—

"I was infinitely diverted with one of the village coolies who accompanied us, his matchlock over his shoulder, the pan carefully closed with a bit of cloth, and a lump of burning cow-dung in his hand, with which to ignite his match if necessary. This worthy, thus equipped, was literally poking his addled head into the very centre of the bush, said to contain the lion, and, moreover, pulling the grass aside to admit of a better view. 'What, in the name of Heaven, are you doing?' exclaimed my companion. 'Doing!' replied the fellow, with evident surprise, and coolly blowing his fid of cow-dung, 'why, looking for the lion, to be sure! Are not you looking for him?'"

One other anecdote of foolhardy daring on the part of an European, and I have done with tigers for this chapter.

Some years ago a notorious tiger was marked into a thicket in Guzerat by the hunters of a young officer, who was on that occasion on foot. He proposed that they should beat out the tiger, while he stood at one end of the jungle to shoot him as he broke cover. On this his men tauntingly replied, "That he dared not enter the jungle, although he asked them

to do so." Fired at this, the young Englishman, exclaiming, "I never bid another do what I fear to do myself," led the way into the dark thicket, followed by two natives. It was so interwoven with creepers, that they were obliged to crawl on their hands and knees; and in this awkward attitude they crept towards the tiger's lair, in almost total darkness. Before there was time to raise a rifle, the monster was upon them with a roar like thunder. Both the natives were struck dead on the spot; and the gallant, though imprudent, young man fell, stunned by a blow that nearly fractured his skull. He was dragged out severely lacerated, but eventually recovered.

Never attack a tiger on foot—if you can help it. There *are* cases in which you *must* do so. Then face him like a Briton, and kill him if you can; for if you fail to kill him, he will certainly kill you. But, unless you are ambitious of obtaining 'la gloire' at any price, do not imitate the example of our Gallic friend, 'Jules Gérard,' the lion-slayer, and challenge your feline antagonist to mortal combat, when you have a chance of potting him from behind a stone. *He* did so, even by moonlight. But then he was a Frenchman!

CHAPTER X.

ON TIGERS.*

As we are now in the land of tigers, and shall have occasion before we leave it, to record several encounters with these interesting 'anthropophagi,' I shall, with the reader's permission, devote this chapter to a few remarks on the nature of the tiger, and the most approved methods of hunting him.

It was my lot to be stationed for some time in a part of the country infested by tigers, and I had, therefore, frequent opportunities of studying their habits and witnessing their ravages. There were few of the poorer classes, inhabiting the villages in my neighbourhood, who had not lost a relation, either killed in attacking a tiger, or, as was more common, carried off by a man-eater. The number of cattle devoured yearly was also enormous, and the ruin thereby occasioned among the unfortunate 'Ryots,'† independent of the loss of human life, became so serious, that government was induced to offer a liberal reward for the head of every tiger killed. Some idea may be formed of the havoc committed by tigers from the fact that, by official returns made to Government, it appeared that in one district alone, three hundred and fifty men, and twenty-four thousand head of cattle were destroyed

* This chapter was written some time after the preceding one, and embodies the experience of several years.

† *Ryots*—cultivators of the soil.

in the course of four years; giving an average of nearly ninety men, and six thousand cattle per annum!*

The general character of the tiger is that of a cowardly, treacherous, and bloodthirsty animal. But he occasionally displays extraordinary courage in his attack; and, when once in action, the obstinacy of his defence, and the silent game with which he dies, cannot be exceeded. The capricious nature of his ferocity sets at defiance all theories, founded on individual instances. One sits crouched in his lair till he is shot to pieces, dying like a sullen savage, without making any effort either to charge or to escape. Another avoids the combat at first, but, when wounded, becomes desperate, and fights to the last gasp. While a third will charge and attack the elephant before a shot has been fired. The sneaking, solitary man-eater†—generally an old tigress—either makes off at the first alarm, and so eludes her pursuers; or lies close hid in some impenetrable thicket, from whence nothing but fire can drive her; and even when fire has been resorted to, I have known a tigress remain till half the hair was singed off her body before she could be induced to break cover. But let the rustle of a solitary footstep reach her ear, and the skulking brute is ready enough to come forth. She

* (Extract from General Briggs' evidence before the Parliamentary Committee on the growth of cotton in India.)

"Were you not once in Kandeish?"—"Yes."

"Were not tigers extremely numerous there?"—"Very numerous."

"Do they not infest villages, and carry off men, women, oxen, and buffaloes?"—"Yes; I was called upon by the Government to make a return of the damage they had done during the four years I was there, and I think it appeared that there were upwards of 350 men who had been carried off, and 24,000 head of cattle, which had been devoured by the tigers in four years."

† *Man-eater*—a term applied to those tigers that haunt villages, and prey chiefly upon men.

crawls to the edge of the thicket and looks around. It is only an unarmed traveller. The hungry devil knows well that he is an easy prey, for many a human skeleton lies bleaching in her den; she creeps towards her unconscious victim with the soft and noiseless tread of a cat—her long tail switches from side to side—her sharp claws dart from their velvet sheath—the devil is roused within her, and glares in her flaming eyeballs—she throws herself forward with a lashing bound—and the stricken wretch is writhing in her fatal grasp; while, with closed eyes and a low growl, expressive of savage delight, she sucks the warm blood from his mangled throat.

A confirmed man-eater always lurks in the neighbourhood of villages, or close to some well-frequented road; and rarely preys upon any other animal than man. When a tiger thus quarters himself, almost at the doors of the inhabitants, a curse has indeed fallen upon them. The ryots cannot cultivate their fields, but at the risk of their lives. The women dare not fetch water from the well. And the persecuted labourers, returning at sunset from their daily toil, may be seen hurrying along with trembling speed, and uttering loud yells, in hopes of scaring their hidden foe.

Peace and security are banished from that devoted village. Day after day some member of the little community disappears—the land is filled with mourning—and the death-lament comes swelling on the evening breeze, instead of the gay notes of the zittar, and the merry laugh of light-hearted maidens. The destroying fiend revels in blood, and becomes daily more open in his attacks.

At length the patient Hindoo is roused to desperation. The young men of the village—each trusting that it may not be his fate to fall in the encounter—bind themselves by an oath to avenge the death of their relations, and rid the country

of this intolerable pest. Armed with swords and shields, the forlorn hope surround the tiger's lair, and rushing upon him simultaneously, they seldom fail to cut him to pieces ; for the Hindoo when once roused to action has no fear of death. But this can only be accomplished when the tiger lies in low jungle ; and the victory is in general dearly enough purchased by a fearful expenditure of human life.

If the tiger has taken up his quarters among sugar-canes, or 'jawarry,' a species of grain which grows to the height of ten feet, he is safe from any attack made by men on foot. It is impossible to dislodge him without the assistance of an elephant ; and the poor disheartened villagers must leave their crops neglected, till the unwelcome tenant chooses to depart.

It is on such occasions that the arrival of an European sportsman is hailed as a blessing from heaven ; and it is in seeking out and destroying such fearful scourges to the human race, that the principal charm of a sportsman's life in India consists.

Several castes of natives are employed in the arduous and dangerous pursuit of finding tigers ; for in Western India the tiger-hunter never beats for his game till it is traced into cover. Working on any other system would not only be rarely successful, but would spoil future sport, by driving from their usual haunts any tigers that might happen to be in the neighbourhood.

In almost every Indian village, there are one or more native hunters, who earn a precarious livelihood by killing game, or finding it for Europeans.

Of these, the most famous are 'Bheels,' a half-savage race, who can follow a trail over the burning sands of Kandeish, with the unerring certainty of a bloodhound.

The 'Wagrees,' another wild tribe, are excellent.

And the 'Bhendars' of the Deccan and Mysore are also most expert in tracking up all wild animals.

Next to a good elephant, the chief essential of a sportsman's establishment, in a tiger-country, is an experienced 'shikári;' a fellow who ought to have the eye of an eagle, the heart of a lion, the constitution of a rhinoceros, and the patience of Job.

On arriving at a village near likely ground, the first care of a good 'shikári' will be to ascertain if any bullocks have been carried off lately by tigers, and to proceed in his search, according to the information he may receive. If without any clue to guide him, he, with a party of assistants, scours the country, and examines every good cover within a circle of several miles.

When a fresh track is found it is followed up—sometimes for days and nights together—till a satisfactory account can be given of it. From one ravine to another, the broad foot-print is traced, sometimes deeply impressed in sand, at others, so slightly marked on stony soil, as to leave no trace visible to an European eye; but to the lynx-eyed 'Bheel,' the displacing of a pebble, the turning of a leaf, or the bruising of a blade of grass is sufficient, and he carries on his work, in silent confidence, to the last piece of jungle entered by the tiger. Having ascertained, by the closest scrutiny, that the animal has not passed through, the place is surrounded.

The tiger is then said to be 'marked down,' and like a fox 'well found,' is considered to be more than 'half-killed.' Sometimes the leading 'Bheel,' not satisfied with thus marking down the tiger, follows up the trail, till he obtains a view of the sleeping brute in his lair; when he retires with a step soft and noiseless as that of the tiger himself, and sends information to his employer.

I have known a trail thus followed up by 'Bheels' for three consecutive days, and the tiger found at last. Nothing can surpass the keenness of vision, and the instinctive certainty, with which these naked savages follow up their game. Beneath a blazing sun they have to pick out the faintest traces, over sand and rocks that glow like heated metal, and throw back upon any other eyes an intolerable glare of light. Yet day after day they toil with determined perseverance, not to be daunted by fatigue, or foiled by disappointment; and rarely do they fail of success.

In parts of the country where good 'shikáris' were not to be obtained, I used to find tigers by fastening a bullock near some ravine or thicket known to be frequented by them; the poor animal was generally carried of in the course of the night: and nothing further was necessary than to follow up the trail of the tiger to some neighbouring cover, where we were sure to find him lying gorged. Tigers are also found when returning at daybreak from their nightly prowl, by men stationed upon trees, who hem them into the first cover they enter. In whatever manner a tiger is found, the great point to insure success, is to procure plenty of hands from the nearest village, and effectually to surround the place, so as to prevent his stealing away before the elephant arrives. If he becomes restless, as he is apt to do when not gorged with food, a shout is generally sufficient to prevent his breaking cover; for, with all his ferocity, the tiger is a cowardly animal, and much averse to shewing himself by daylight.

Having found our tiger, we must, before proceeding to action, devote a few words to that most useful auxiliary—the elephant. A really good sporting elephant is invaluable. He beats for his game like a pointer; and carries his rider in safety over the most dangerous ground, and through the

thickest covers, which he searches inch by inch, with a degree of patience and sagacity that makes instinct almost amount to reason. Trees that oppose his progress are levelled by his head, or torn down with his trunk: his stupendous weight forces itself through every obstacle; and at the word of command, the sagacious brute picks up stones and hands them to his driver to throw into the thicker parts of the cover.

On finding the tiger, the elephant gives warning of his proximity, by throwing up his trunk and trumpeting; and if well trained, should remain perfectly steady, ready to obey every command of his 'mahout.'

The worst fault an elephant can have, is a propensity to charge the tiger. In doing so, the violence of his motion is apt to unseat the riders, rendering it impossible to take aim; and what is still worse, he generally throws himself upon his knees at the moment of attack, pitching the men out of the howdah by the violence of the shock. This bad habit is usually caused by the driver encouraging his elephant to trample upon a tiger when killed, and thereby rendering the animal ferocious. Nothing is required of an elephant but to remain perfectly steady when a tiger is found; and the best way of training him to do so, is to make him stand quietly over the tiger after he is killed, without allowing him to touch it; while the driver encourages him by his voice, and rewards him with balls of sugar dipped in the blood of the animal. Some elephants are so steady, as to allow a tiger to rush up to their heads without flinching; but there are few that are not more or less alarmed by a determined charge. A veteran gains confidence, and is at length made perfect by the coolness of his driver, and the good shooting of his owner; but those which are ill-entered turn round and often run away at the first roar of a tiger; and even the best and

most practised are often rendered useless, and become irrecoverably timid, by wounds received in a successful charge.

I have had occasion to use nervous, timid elephants, and they are bad enough; but I would rather ride a determined runaway, than a savage brute who insists on killing the tiger himself. It is, no doubt, a severe trial to the nerves to find yourself hurried away by a huge ungovernable monster, with the prospect of being either smashed against a tree, or rolled into a ravine; but this is nothing to the risk you incur on a fighting elephant, of being pitched into the jaws of an enraged tiger, or pounded to a jelly under the elephant's knees.

On a really good elephant the sportsman is exposed to little danger; less perhaps than in most Indian field-sports. He is raised from ten to twelve feet off the ground, on a comfortable seat, from whence he can fire in all directions, and he must be a bad shot indeed if he fails to stop a tiger in his charge. But even supposing that he does miss—which he has no business to do—and allows a savage tiger to spring upon the elephant, still the man is seldom the object of attack, and he ought to be able to blow the brute's brains out before he does much mischief. Tigers generally spring at the elephant's head, rarely making any attempts to reach the howdah. Instances of their doing so have occurred, but they are very rare.

The 'mahout,' or driver, next claims our attention. He is a most important personage in a tiger-hunt, and success mainly depends upon his courage and presence of mind. Seated upon the elephant's neck, his feet supported by rope stirrups, he guides his unwieldy charge, partly by his voice, and partly by means of a sharp instrument resembling a short boat-hook. With the point of this he goads the elephant for-

ward, or punishes him when restive, and, by applying the hook to his forehead, or to one of his ears, he stops him or turns him to either side. The position of the driver is by no means an enviable one. Jolted almost to death by the uneasy motion of the elephant's head, torn by thorns, abused without mercy by his master when anything goes wrong, and exposed to the double risk of being pulled down by the tiger, or shot by some careless fellow in firing over his head, from the howdah, he requires more than an average allowance of patience as well as courage ; and I must do these gallant fellows the justice to say that I have generally found them game to the backbone ; and not only willing, but anxious, to urge their elephants forward in the face of every danger. Courage is an indispensable quality in a 'mahout;' if he wants this the elephant soon finds it out, and shews the same timidity as his driver. He ought to be perfectly cool on all occasions, and devote his whole attention to bringing up his elephant steadily and resolutely to within twenty yards of the tiger. He should also watch the motions of those in the howdah, and the moment a gun is raised, should turn the elephant's head a little to one side, and keep him perfectly still, for much depends upon the success of the first shot. A tiger well-found is, as I said before, half-killed, and, once hit, his death is almost sure to follow.

On arriving at the place where the tiger has been marked down, the sportsman's first care is to reconnoitre the ground carefully ; and to place his look-out men upon trees and eminences, so as effectually to surround the cover, and prevent the tiger from stealing away unobserved. The elephant then advances slowly, pushing aside the tangled brushwood, and tearing open every thicket, while the sportsman carefully examines them as he proceeds. Excitement becomes intense

as the elephant, by trumpeting or signs of agitation, shews that the game is near. Each rustle makes the heart beat, and is answered by the sharp click of the lock, as the anxious sportsman cocks and half raises the rifle to his shoulder. At length a deep growl is heard, and hope is wound up to the thrilling certainty of a find. If the tiger is not disabled by the first shot, he either charges the elephant or endeavours to break away. In the first case, by good shooting, he is frequently rolled over under the elephant's trunk; in the other he is turned by the shouts of the beaters, or by fireworks, if possible, and kept within the cover till he is despatched. Should he, however, break away, his escape is telegraphed by the look-out men, and the hunters, accompanied by the elephant, follow up his trail, till he is again marked down. Horsemen are also frequently employed to ride after a tiger and mark him down, when he breaks away over an open country.

When the tiger lies in a deep ravine, it is often impossible to attack him in his stronghold. In this case, the elephant is posted at one end of the ravine; while the beaters rouse the game by shouting, blowing horns, and throwing in fireworks; and, as a last resource, it is sometimes found necessary to set fire to the cover.

In the absence of an elephant, tigers may be beat up, and shot from trees, without any risk; for it is a curious fact, that tigers never attempt to climb, although their form appears peculiarly well adapted for so doing. Their great weight may perhaps prevent them; but, more probably, the nature of the animals on which they prey precluding the necessity of resorting to this means of securing them, they are not called upon to exert a power which they do possess.

I have already mentioned an instance which came under my observation, of a man being pulled down from a tree, and

killed by a tigress: but he was not at a sufficient height from the ground to be out of reach of her first spring, and I believe that had he been two feet higher, he would have been perfectly safe.

I have frequently shot very savage tigers from trees not more than ten feet high, but never saw any attempt to climb, even when they saw plainly from whence the shot was fired. In most cases, however, the tiger, when hit from a tree, is quite unconscious of the sportsman's position; very rarely looking up to seek his foe, but springing forward, as if he always looked for danger in front.

Although some of the finest features of the sport are lost by pursuing this method of shooting from trees, yet there is something indescribably exciting in watching for a tiger's approach. I have seen and shot many; and yet, to the last, the jungle king always burst upon my sight with a startling shock, that must be felt to be conceived. The noble brute, in all the consciousness of his tremendous strength, stands, in striped beauty, before you; for years he has been the tyrant of some gloomy thicket, and no eyes have rested on his mighty form, save those of some poor mangled wretch, who cast one despairing look upon his destroyer, ere he died.

There he stands for an instant, full of life, a model of strength and activity combined. Uttering a deep growl of defiance, he strides along with stately pace, to seek his stronghold, where neither man nor beast dare follow. But he will never reach it—the crack of the rifle rings in his startled ear —the ragged bullet speeds hissing through his lungs—he springs from the earth with a convulsive bound—the life-blood bubbles from his gasping throat—and his dying growl is mocked by his pursuers.

A common method of killing tigers, is by watching them

at night, and shooting them from a tree when they return to feed on the carcass of a bullock which they have killed on the previous day. But this plan is both tedious and uncertain, and is more congenial to the taste of a Hindoo than that of an European sportsman.

I have known men who were in the habit of shooting tigers on foot; but this sport is attended with so much danger, that few experienced sportsmen ever indulge in it; and I have remarked that those who did so were pretty sure, sooner or later, to come to an untimely end. All the cat tribe are remarkable for their tenacity of life, and this alone is sufficient to render tiger-shooting on foot a most hazardous attempt. For even allowing that a man has sufficient confidence in his own nerve to permit a tiger to approach quite close, in the certainty of hitting him between the eyes, yet he is still far from safe. Any old sportsman can assure him, that a ball through the head is not certain to stop a tiger. I have myself seen two run a considerable distance, and even charge the elephant, after receiving a ball in the forehead. Fatal accidents too often occur from men carelessly approaching a fallen tiger. A Madras sepoy was killed some years ago while measuring a tiger which had fallen, and was apparently dead; the expiring brute struck at him, and fractured his skull by one blow of his tremendous paw. Only a few months have elapsed since an officer in the Madras army was struck dead by a dying tiger, under precisely similar circumstances. I recollect another instance of a poor fellow who was rendered a cripple for life in the same way. He, with his father, an old hunter, fired from a tree at a tiger, which, to all appearance, fell dead. The young man, contrary to his father's earnest entreaties, leapt down, and applied his match to the tiger's whiskers, for the purpose of singeing them off.

The tiger turned upon him, and seizing him by the thigh, held him fast, till forced by death to relax the gripe. I saw the lad walking with a crutch some months after the accident occurred. The limb was then contracted and wasted to the bone, without any prospect of its ever improving.

In proof of the extraordinary muscular power which a tiger can exert, I shall quote two remarkable instances among many that have come under my notice.

A bullock was killed by a tiger near our encampment, on the banks of the Tumboodra, in a field surrounded by a hedge of prickly-pear, about six feet in height. The carcass of the bullock, still warm, was observed by one of our peons, who brought intelligence to the tents. Within two hours we were at the spot, and, to our astonishment, found the carcass of the bullock, partly devoured, on the outside of the fence, although the animal had evidently been killed within it. Not a twig in the hedge was broken, and the only clue to account for this apparent mystery, were the deeply-impressed foot-prints of a large tiger, on either side of the hedge, from which it appeared that he must have sprung over the barrier with his prey in his jaws. The confirmation afforded, by palpable traces, to the peon's assertion that the bullock had been killed within the inclosure, and the impossibility of the carcass having been removed in any other way, alone convinced us of this fact; otherwise we could not have believed that an animal weighing under 600 lb. could have exerted such prodigious strength.

Any one who has examined the anatomical structure of a tiger, however, would readily believe the extraordinary power he is capable of exerting. His fore-leg is the most perfect and beautiful piece of mechanism that can be conceived, supported by a bone as hard and compact as ivory, and display-

ing a mass of sinew and muscle, to be found only in this most formidable weapon, of the most agile and destructive of all animals.* His jaws, neck, and shoulders, evince corresponding strength. And, with reference to the foregoing anecdote, it must be borne in mind, that the cattle of India (with the exception of buffaloes and a particular breed used for drawing carriages), are of small size, and do not usually exceed the tiger himself in weight.

The other instance to which I have alluded was as follows:—

Four fine oxen, harnessed in the same team, were destroyed by a tiger while their owner was driving them in the plough. He described their death as having been the work of a few seconds. When in the act of turning his cattle at the end of a furrow, a tiger sprang from some neighbouring brushwood on the leading bullock, broke his neck by a single wrench, and before the other terrified animals could disengage themselves, all were destroyed in the same manner. The man fled to a neighbouring tree, from whence he saw the monster finish his work of death, and then trot back into the jungle without touching the carcases; as if he had done it from mere love of slaughter, and not to satisfy the cravings of hunger.

My friend Elliot, from whom I had this anecdote, saw the bullocks immediately after they were killed; and found that one of them had been thrown back with such violence, that his horns were driven into the ground to a considerable depth.

I once examined the carcass of a bullock that had been killed by a tiger. It exhibited no marks of violence, except

* The forearm of a moderate-sized tiger, of which I took the dimensions with great accuracy, measured two feet seven inches in circumference. The tiger measured, from point of nose to end of tail, nine feet five inches.

the punctures of five claws on each side of the head, and a stream of blood flowing from the nostrils ; but the skull was so completely smashed, that the head yielded to the pressure of my hand, like a bag full of crushed bones.

A curious mode of killing tigers, practised by the natives of the Wynad district, deserves notice. When one of these animals is discovered, the covert in which he lies is inclosed by a strong net, supported by bamboos of a sufficient height to prevent his leaping over it. All being prepared, the villagers, headed by their priests, surround the outside of the net, armed with long spears ; and, provoking the tiger to attack them, they meet him as he charges, and pierce him through this apparently feeble, but impassable barrier, till he falls.

A gentleman who was present at one of these scenes, describes it as most interesting, and exciting in the highest degree ; for there existed the appearance of imminent danger, although, in reality, it was almost impossible for the tiger to reach his assailants. The net, loosely suspended, yielded to the bounds made by the enraged animal without breaking ; and he retired, bleeding and discouraged, from each attack.

Tigers have been speared, however, without any such defence as that just described. Colonel Welsh, in a work upon India, published some years ago, mentioned the Resident at Mysore having procured several live tigers and leopards, which were, upon different occasions, turned out upon the race-course at Bangalore, and speared by himself and two gentlemen from horseback.

This, although a daring feat, and one which argues great courage on the part of the horse, is one which I can conceive unattended with any very great risk, from what I have seen of the cowardly nature of the tiger after he has been once captured.

But what will be said to the feat recorded by Sir J. M., who was an eyewitness to the fact, of a gentleman (I do not recollect his name at present, but I think it was Captain Skinner), who used, single-handed, and armed only with a spear, to kill tigers in the field off a little Arab horse?

Were it not that this fact is too notorious to be doubted, I would hardly expect any one, who knows a tiger's powers, to believe this possible. There are few animals that an Indian sportsman, armed with a spear, and mounted on a high-couraged horse, may not venture to attack, with good hopes of success. I have myself known many instances of leopards being speared in this manner. But from what I have seen of the tiger, I should say it required more nerve—more lion-like courage, rather—to attack a tiger thus, than to perform any deed of prowess against wild animals, that has ever come under my notice. I believe the method pursued by this daring horseman, was to gallop round the tiger, in a circle, gradually diminishing the distance, till he found himself within reach, when he threw his spear with unerring aim, and instantly wheeled off, to avoid the charge of the animal in the event of his being only wounded.

Five brothers, all fine resolute young fellows, who lived at Shikarpoor, in the Mysore country, were in the habit of attacking tigers when asleep and gorged with food, and destroying them by one determined charge. They advanced in a body, each armed with a long, stout spear, and at a preconcerted signal, plunged their weapons at the same moment into the sleeping brute.

When I last heard of them they had killed several tigers without any accident occurring; but I should think this system could not be long pursued unattended by some fatal disaster. It could only be attempted successfully when the

tiger was lying, gorged with food, in some open place, free of thick jungle, and easy of access, where all the men could get round him unperceived; for if he discovered his assailants before the blow was struck, fifty, instead of five, would have but little chance against him.

The natives, in the wilder districts, make use of various devices for killing tigers—such as poison, pitfalls, and traps of various kinds; but these hardly come under the denomination of hunting, and have been too often described to require any particular notice here.

In countries well stocked with cattle, tigers prey almost entirely on them—even the huge buffalo falls beneath his strength when taken by surprise; but when prepared, he resists, and not unfrequently beats off the aggressor.

At the courts of Native Princes, it is usual, at great festivals, to exhibit combats between buffaloes and tigers, in which the former almost invariably come off victorious. It must be remembered, however, that a tiger loses all courage in confinement, and suffers the buffalo to toss him about with his huge horns, without making any effectual effort to defend himself.

Two tigers, which had been taken in a box-trap near Dharwar, were turned out in the courtyard of an old fort, before a large male buffalo. The tigers, instead of showing fight, ran round the walls trying to conceal themselves, the bull following them up, and tossing them like footballs; till in pity to their misery, and disgust at their cowardice, we put an end to the scene by shooting them.

Several hunters in the Canara Forest have told me that jungle-dogs, when assembled in large packs, frequently attack and tear tigers to pieces.

Two or three instances of this have been related to me

which I hardly know whether to believe or not. The wild dog of India is a very fierce animal, about the size of a large pointer, of an uniform red, or bright chestnut colour, with upright pointed ears, and a drooping bushy tail. They hunt in packs of from ten to thirty, and run mute. They are capable of pulling down almost any animal inhabiting the forest, and have even been known to attack men.

With regard to their attacking tigers, I can only vouch for this fact, that tigers appear to dread them, or at least to dislike their company, and decamp from their usual haunts whenever a pack of wild dogs take up their quarters in the same cover.

Evening is the time at which tigers seek their prey. During the day they seldom move from the thicket which they have selected as their lair, and it is owing to this cause that they are rarely seen unsought.

I believe that a tiger, unless a confirmed man-eater, will not attack a man by daylight, except under peculiar circumstances, such as meeting him suddenly face to face; or when pressed by hunger; or in defence of its young, when a tigress is on the watch to prevent any one from approaching her offspring.

This last feeling, which inspires the most timid animals with courage, would lead us to suppose that the savage tigress would become fierce enough to protect her young from any danger; but I have not found this to be the case. We frequently killed tigresses, with cubs of all ages, and I never saw one evince any maternal affection when she herself was in danger. They generally left their young to shift for themselves, displaying no unusual ferocity, nor any anxiety for the safety of their cubs.

The instinctive dread of man, which is implanted in the

nature of every animal, prevents even the bloodthirsty tiger from making him his prey; until accident has once shewn the brute how inferior in bodily strength is man to the animals on which he usually feeds. This discovery once made, and human flesh once tasted, the nature of the tiger appears to be changed.

From the day on which he first overcomes the Lord of the Creation, he feels that his former dread of man was groundless. It is easier far to grind the bones of our feeble frame than to dislocate the spine of an ox; and the tiger, finding this, becomes a man-eater. He now deserts the forest and takes up his quarters in the neighbourhood of some village—cattle pass by unheeded, but their owners perish; and the tiger then becomes the most fearful of all animals.*

A man-eater generally becomes remarkably cunning, as will be seen by the following anecdote:—

Some years ago, a tigress in Kandeish was the terror of the country, which she haunted like a destroying fiend. She preyed entirely upon men; shifting her quarters from village to village so rapidly, as to render it exceedingly difficult to mark her down. To-day a man was carried off; every cover in the neighbourhood was tried in vain—the enemy had

* My observation leads me to believe that wherever game or cattle are tolerably plentiful, tigers never take to human prey until prevented by age and infirmity from killing larger animals.

A man-eater is always described by the natives as being a white, mangy tiger, with the hair falling off.

Several noted man-eaters that I have seen were old animals, the fur gray with age, the teeth black and decayed, the incisors all gone, and the tusks worn to the root. It is from sheer feebleness that they are driven to attack human victims, to which they are the more encouraged by finding them such easy prey. Hence, too, their cunning and skill in eluding pursuit, of which the instance related in the text, which occurred to the late Sir James Outram, is a remarkable example.—W. E.

decamped; and next morning another victim had disappeared from a village many miles distant. Rewards were offered by Government for her destruction; they were doubled; but such was the dread inspired by this tigress, whose cunning was only equalled by her ferocity, that no one would venture to attack her. Matters became worse; whole villages were deserted; people hardly dared to leave their houses; and day after day some family was left mourning. Of course the Kandeish European sportsmen proceeded to beat up her quarters as soon as information reached them. A chosen band of Bheels were put upon her trail, and for four days followed it incessantly, over burning sands, before they could surround her; so watchful had she become in guarding against surprise—but what will not Bheels accomplish?

On the fourth day the welcome intelligence reached headquarters that this famous tigress was at last hemmed into a small thicket. Several sportsmen, accompanied by a good elephant, were soon at the ground. They arrived on horseback, and one of them in crossing a small ravine leading into the cover was charged by the tigress, and escaped only by his horse's speed. She was already on the alert, and no time was to be lost. The elephant was mounted, and with a Bheel walking by his side to track, proceeded into the cover. The trail was very distinct, and after leading them in a circuitous direction round the jungle, returned to the very spot where they had first taken it up. Here all further trace was lost, and even the Bheel was at fault. A cast was made without success, but on trying back they were astonished by discovering the fresh track of a tiger *over that of the elephant.* This was quite unaccountable. Again they made a circuit of the jungle, and again the mysterious footprint followed, but still no tiger appeared. They halted, uncertain how to proceed.

The Bheel had just left the elephant's side, and Captain Outram who was in the howdah, had turned to look behind him, when, to his utter amazement, he encountered the gaze of the crafty old devil of a tigress, crouching close under the elephant's crupper, and intently eyeing the Bheel, as if watching her opportunity to spring upon him the moment he exposed himself by leaving the cover of the howdah. She had all along been following in the footsteps of the elephant, which accounted for the mysterious double trail, and appeared bent upon carrying off the Bheel, as if aware that without the aid of his sagacity the weapons of the sportsmen would be of little avail. Her hour was come at last. Captain Outram seized the favourable moment, and a ball, directly between the eyes, laid her dead upon the spot. Thus fell one of the most cunning and destructive brutes that ever infested a country.

Before dismissing the subject of tiger-hunting, I cannot resist introducing a ludicrous adventure told me by an old Kandeish sportsman, in whose own words I shall endeavour to relate it.

"We were closing in upon a wounded tiger, whose hind leg was broken. Some Bheels, who had run up the trail to a patch of high grass, were drawing back, now that their game was found, when the brute started up behind the elephant, and charged the nearest man, a little hairy, bandy-legged, square-built oddity, more like a satyr than a human being. Away spun the Bheel for the nearest tree, with the wounded tiger roaring at his haunches. By the Prophet, sir, it would have done your heart good to see the springs the active little sinner made. Just in time he reached the tree, and scrambled into a branch, hardly out of reach. There he sat, crouched up into the smallest possible compass, expecting

every moment to be among the Houris. The tiger made several desperate efforts to reach him, but the broken hind leg failing, he dropped back exhausted. It was now the Bheel's turn. He saw that he was safe, and accordingly commenced a philippic against the father and mother, sisters, aunts, nieces, and children, of his helpless enemy; who sat with glaring eyeballs fixed on his contemptible little reviler, and roaring as if his heart would break with rage. As the excited orator warmed by his own eloquence, he began skipping from branch to branch, grinning and chattering with the emphasis of an enraged baboon; pouring out a torrent of the most foul abuse; and attributing to the tiger's family in general, and his female relatives in particular, every crime and atrocity that ever was or will be committed. Occasionally he varied his insults by roaring, in imitation of the tiger; and at last, when fairly exhausted, he leant forward till he appeared within the grasp of the enraged animal, and ended this inimitable scene by spitting in his face. So very absurd was the whole farce, that we who were at first shoving up the elephant, in alarm for the safety of our little hairy friend, ended by laughing till our sides ached; and it was not without reluctance that we put an end to the scene by firing a death-volley."

The panther—of which two, and in the opinion of some sportsmen, three varieties are found in India—is scarcely less formidable than the tiger. Its inferior strength is compensated by greater agility, and the extreme rapidity of its attack renders it, in my opinion, a still more dangerous animal to encounter on foot. It is generally found in rocky ravines and thickly-wooded hills, and from the nature of its haunts, as well as its skulking habits, it is difficult to mark down. From these causes it is not so frequently encountered as the tiger, and its habits are, consequently,

less familiar to European sportsmen than those of the larger felinæ.*

The description already given of the system pursued in tiger-shooting applies equally to the hunting of this animal. Both are followed on elephants, or beat up and shot from trees. But it should be remembered that, although a tiger cannot climb, a panther can; and a branch safe from the attack of the former, may afford little or no protection against the superior activity of the latter. Panthers have, on several occasions, been speared from horseback; but the serious accidents which have occurred, and which are always likely to occur, in so very dangerous a sport, have prevented its becoming a general practice, even among the most daring.

* There are, I think, certainly two distinct species of panthers, one considerably larger than the other, and of the former two varieties.

The larger species, or true panther, is named *Tendwa* by the natives, and is found more generally in the open country. Its characteristics, a taller, slenderer form; short, light-coloured close fur; the rose-spots more distinct; and it has a well-defined bony ridge on the skull for the attachment of the muscles of the neck. The smaller kind is more properly a leopard. It is much smaller, shorter-limbed, and stouter in proportion; the fur long and loose, of a darker colour; the rose-spots fewer and less distinct; the skull round and smooth, without the ridge on the vertex, and like that of the domestic cat. It is confined to the forest tracts, and is known to the natives as the *Górbacha*. The former preys on cattle, and is a dangerous enemy, from its activity and strength, when attacked. The latter contents itself with dogs, kids, and such small gear; and is easily despatched, when found, with swords, spears, or clubs.

Of the panther there are two varieties, the normal form and the black panther. That this difference of colour indicates variety only is proved by the discovery of a litter of three young panthers, of which two were spotted and one black. This from an eye-witness.—W. E.

CHAPTER XI.

AN EXCURSION TO GOA.

It was soon after our return from the western forest that I first became acquainted with my highly-respected friend, Dr. Macphee; and often do I look back with pleasure to the day when I first extended the hand of friendship to that very eccentric, but most worthy and warm-hearted of God's creatures. At the time I write of, Dr. Macphee was assistant-surgeon in the regiment then quartered at Dharwar; but being on the sick report when I arrived there, suffering from a dangerous attack of jungle-fever, I had not before this time an opportunity of seeing him. He was, however, well known to me by name, for his illness was looked upon as a public calamity; and men, women, and children, vied with each other in their daily and anxious inquiries after 'the dear Doctor.' Never was a creature more universally popular, or more deservedly so; for he was not only the life and soul of our hunting parties, but the oracle of the tea-tables, and the favourite playfellow of all the curly-headed little boys and girls at the station. For his male friends he had scientific information or dry jokes and queer Scotch stories, according as one or other happened to suit their capacity, and on either subject he appeared equally at home. He had small talk and sly glances for the young ladies, an invaluable collection of receipts, both culinary and medical, for those of more mature age; and for his young friends he had always a

kind word and a kind kiss, besides a certain capacious pocket into which the urchins seldom thrust their little paws without fishing up some of those curiously-devised sweetmeats, for which the native confectioners, or 'hulwaees,' are so justly celebrated. It may therefore be supposed that the day on which the worthy Doctor first made his appearance in public after his long illness was one of general rejoicing throughout the cantonment.

A large party of us were sitting at breakfast in Elliot's bungalow, and were congratulating ourselves on the favourable report we had just heard of the Doctor's rapid progress towards convalescence; when the door slowly opened, and the head of that worthy, surmounted by a red nightcap, was thrust into the room. For a moment he stood surveying the group, while a benevolent smile lighted up his pale features, with a look of gratitude that said, as plain as words could have done, "God bless you, lads, for your kind remembrance of poor Jock Macphee," and the next moment the warm-hearted creature was sitting among us, with a tear of gratitude glistening in his eye, while his young companions crowded round him and almost overwhelmed him with their clamorous but hearty congratulations.

My heart warmed towards the honest Scotch face of my countryman the moment I saw him; and from that day forth Dr. Macphee and I were sworn friends.

To many of my readers I flatter myself the Doctor may be presented as an old friend, and one with whom I hope they will be glad to renew their acquaintance. But for the benefit of those who do not know him, I shall here transcribe the description given of him on his first introduction to the public in 'The Old Forest Ranger.'

"The Doctor was a tall, bony, loose-jointed figure, apparently about fifty years of age, who looked as if his limbs

were attached to his body by wires. His large hands, covered with red hair and freckles, projected several inches beyond the sleeves of his scanty jacket, and his gaunt, misshapen legs terminated in a sort of 'palmated' foot—I can find no better word to express its peculiar formation—which gave to the whole limb the appearance of an ingeniously-contrived machine for crushing cockroaches or stopping a mouse in a corner. His head was thatched rather than clothed with coarse red hair; and his face—but how can I ever hope to do justice to that inimitably-expressive countenance? It was a face which, at first sight, gave one a lively idea of the knight of the rueful countenance. There was the sallow complexion, the high cheek-bones, the capacious mouth, the interminable nose, and the solemn look of a Don Quixote. Yet with all this there were lines of mirth lurking round the corners of the mouth, a pawky expression in the eye, and an extraordinary power of motion in the end of the long proboscis, which, when called into action, rendered the worthy Doctor's face one of the most perfectly mirth-inspiring I have ever had the good fortune to meet with. Of his character I shall only say that, under this rough exterior, my friend the Doctor carried a heart true as steel, and overflowing not only with mirth, but with the unadulterated milk of human kindness."

I must beg the imaginative reader to fancy this curious mortal, considerably attenuated by sickness, clothed in an ample chintz dressing-gown and loose musquito trousers; his feet thrust into a pair of embroidered slippers; his head, from which he had removed the nightcap, closely shaved; his features pale and haggard, rendering his high cheek-bones a little more prominent than usual; and his fiery red whiskers appearing doubly red from the contrast afforded by his sickly complexion; and he will have some idea of the Doctor's per-

sonal appearance on the memorable morning when I had the good fortune to make his acquaintance.

"Your friend the Doctor must have been a gentleman of very unprepossessing appearance," I can fancy some of my fair readers remarking with a smile.

And so he was at first sight. But, my dear young lady, had you seen his benevolent smile, had you felt the kindly pressure of his hand, and marked the unbidden tear that gushed from his warm heart and trickled to the end of his long thin nose as he listened to the affectionate congratulations of his young companions, you would have loved him in spite of yourself, and I trust you will yet do so when you become better acquainted with him.

My brother and I have, for some time back, been talking of making an excursion to the western coast, to visit the ancient Portuguese settlement of Goa; and the Doctor, being advised to go somewhere for change of air, has agreed to accompany us. This is a most agreeable arrangement for us, for the Doctor is well acquainted with that part of the country, and being a good linguist, will prove a most useful cicerone, as well as an amusing companion. We are to start as soon as the Doctor is sufficiently recovered to bear the fatigue of travelling.

Belgaum, March 9th.—We are so far on our way to Goa. The Doctor, being still too weak to undertake a long march on horseback, came on here yesterday in a palanquin. My brother and I started by moonlight, at four o'clock this morning, on horseback. Having two relays of horses posted on the road, we cantered over the distance, fifty-two miles, in four hours and a half, and arrived here in good time for breakfast, where we have been most hospitably received by General Kennedy, the commandant of the station.

March 10*th*.—From Belgaum we marched thirty miles to Patna, where there is a public bungalow, and some good ground for snipe and wild-fowl. The Doctor felt so much better after the first day's journey that he dismissed his palanquin at Belgaum, and rode this march without suffering much from fatigue.

March 11*th*.—We started this morning an hour before daylight, partly for the sake of accomplishing the march before the heat became oppressive, and partly to give ourselves time to explore the beautiful scenery of the Ram Ghaut, one of the mountain passes leading from the table-land of the Mahratta country to the richly-wooded plains of the Concan.

While passing the ruins of an old deserted fort a little before daylight, I heard for the first time the cry of a hyæna, and coming as it did unexpectedly and in the silence of night, it struck me as the most unearthly sound I had ever heard. The wailing cry of the jackal is bad enough, but it is music compared to the voice of this obscene brute, this prowler among tombs, this 'ghoul.' What to compare it to I know not, unless it be the expiring shrieks of some tortured wretch, mingled with the gibbering of maniacs and the mocking laughter of fiends; in short, there is a devilish character about it which it is hardly possible to describe; but once heard it can never be forgotten.

During our march we fell in with a party of those curious people the 'Brinjaries,' or gipsies of India; and a few straggling Pindaree horsemen armed to the teeth, and mounted on their little, active, thoroughbred-looking steeds, low in condition, but full of fire, and exhibiting points indicative of great endurance as well as speed.

In these piping times of peace the warlike Pindaree, once

the terror of the Mahratta country, is reduced to the necessity of earning a scanty pittance by cutting firewood in the jungles, to dispose of in the very villages through which in days of yore he used to ride triumphant, laden with spoil. But even when engaged in this peaceful occupation he never parts with his beloved weapons. His long taper lance, and steel-hilted sword, are free from rust and keen as ever. He evidently loathes his present inglorious mode of life. The haughty glance with which he eyes the European traveller shows that the spirit of the daring freebooter still glows within his breast; and although reduced to be a hewer of wood, his proud heart yearns after the good old times, when his hand was against every man, and every man's hand against him.

The 'Brinjaries' of India, like the gipsies of other countries, are a wandering race; they travel about the country, living in tents; and earn a livelihood by trading in grain, for the transport of which they keep large droves of remarkably fine bullocks. In time of war they are—in consideration of the useful nature of their traffic—looked upon as neutrals by all parties; and pass freely through the most disturbed districts, without fear of molestation. I believe, indeed, that their persons are held sacred even by the bloodthirsty 'Thugs.'

Some of their women are strikingly handsome; and are said to be remarkable for chastity and fidelity to their husbands—rare virtues among Indian females. The women of this tribe wear a peculiar and very handsome dress, which adds greatly to their picturesque appearance. It is similar to what we see represented in ancient Egyptian paintings; and is probably the identical style of dress worn by Pharaoh's daughter and Potiphar's wife.

There was one woman among the 'Brinjaries' we met this

morning, with whose dress and appearance I was particularly struck. She was a tall, graceful creature, with the step and bearing of a queen; and her features, strikingly handsome, were stamped with an expression of native dignity that might well have become a Cleopatra. Her picturesque dress—the antique pattern of which carried the imagination back to the palmy days of ancient Egypt—was arranged with considerable care, so as to display her graceful figure to the best advantage. Her well-rounded arms, naked from the shoulder, were ornamented, both above and below the elbow, with armlets of a strange antique pattern, which, for all we know to the contrary, may have been coeval with the pyramids—heirlooms, perhaps, handed down from mother to daughter since the days of Cheops. Her glossy black hair, braided with classical taste, was also decked with a profusion of gold ornaments; and her flowing robe, of a rich brown colour, was edged down the front and round the bottom with a broad crimson border covered with strange hieroglyphic figures embroidered in black. A handsome girdle, also covered with hieroglyphics, encircled her waist, and her feet were shod with sandals, richly ornamented with silver studs. As she sailed past at the head of her tribe, and returned our salutations with a graceful inclination of the body, I thought I had never beheld a more noble-looking creature.

"It's Pharaoh's daughter come to life again, and turned queen of the gipsies!" exclaimed the Doctor, in a fit of enthusiasm, after gazing on her till a turn in the road concealed her from sight. And certainly a finer figure to represent the character could hardly have been selected.

We reached the bungalow, at the top of Ram Ghaut, before the heat became oppressive; and after breakfast, while the Doctor lay down to rest, my brother and I, being both tolerably

sun-proof, strolled out among the woods in search of game and the picturesque.

This was my first introduction to mountain scenery in India, and the magnificent view we enjoyed from the top of the pass fully realised the expectations I had formed of it. Standing on a projecting spur of the mountain-range, some four thousand feet above the level of the plain, we looked directly down into the gloomy depths of the forest that clothes the sides and surrounds the base of the Ghauts; and beyond this the eye ranged for leagues over the richly-wooded country of the Concan; till groves and temples, and palm trees and villages, faded away in the distance, and became blended with the mysterious copper-coloured haze that shrouded the horizon. A silence deeper than that of midnight reigned around. Nature appeared to faint under the intolerable glare of an Indian noon; and the very air, as if sick with heat, seemed to have lost all power of motion. The beasts of the forest had plunged into the deepest thickets to seek for shade; the birds dozed upon the boughs; the innumerable insects, at other times so noisy, were now silent; and the only living things that appeared in motion were the beautiful little lizards, in their gorgeous livery of green enamel and gold, who, far from shunning the glare, lay basking on the heated rocks, or darted about in search of their insect food, like animated sunbeams.

We saw numerous traces of deer during our ramble; but at the dead hour of noon, when wild animals lie hid in the densest thickets, it is labour in vain to seek for them, and we therefore contented ourselves with shooting a peacock and a few jungle-fowl for our evening meal. On our way back we started a panther in a thickly-wooded ravine close to the bungalow, and sent a couple of balls after him as he dashed

down the hill; but as he did not reply to our salute, we concluded that our shots had not taken effect.

After partaking of an excellent curry and a cool bottle of light claret, we sent on our horses and servants; and in the cool of the evening walked down the pass (six miles) to the village of Goacuchawarry, where we spent the night in a small bell-tent, not much larger than a good-sized umbrella, but just sufficient to protect us from the dew.

On our way down the pass we found an unfortunate baggage-bullock that had dropped from fatigue in ascending the mountain; and had been left by its inhuman master to die on the road. It appeared to have lain there for some days, for although it still breathed, its eyes had been picked out by the vultures, and its carcass was swelled and bloated, as if already half corrupted by the intense heat.

As there were no natives in sight to execrate the sacrilegious act of slaying a sacred animal, I took the liberty of putting it out of pain by shooting it through the head. This I considered an act of mercy. But had the benighted pagan who drove the poor animal to death been witness to the deed, his blood would have run cold with horror, and he would have looked upon me as something worse than a murderer—a demon in human shape—a wretch abhorred by gods and men.

He worshipped that blessed animal. Before starting on the journey that caused its death, he consecrated his house by sprinkling the floors and doorposts with water, in which a quantity of the animal's dung had been mixed; he concluded his morning devotions by smearing his breast and forehead with sacred ashes prepared from the same substance; and thanking God that he is a good Hindoo, he lays upon the back of his half-starved bullock a load sufficient for a camel, and goes on his way rejoicing. He reaches the foot of the mountain-

pass, and the overladen bullock, already tottering with fatigue, commences the toilsome ascent. By dint of a vigorous application of the goad, the first mile is accomplished ; but here the strength of the poor brute fails, and sick and bleeding it lies down to rest. The good Hindoo assails the object of his worship with kicks and curses ; and by twisting its tail till the joints crack, he succeeds in getting it once more upon its legs. Another half mile is accomplished, but nature again fails, and again the overtasked brute sinks under its load. Kicks and blows are once more resorted to ; and the tail is twisted with savage energy, till each individual joint is dislocated or broken ; but the patient brute only replies with deep groans.

The devout Hindoo is at his wit's end ; and in the extremity of his wrath, he even dares to curse the Brahmin bull that begat this unsainted bullock.

He fumbles in his pouch and discovers a fresh chili—a gleam of hope lights up his swarthy features—he cuts the chili in two, and squeezes the pungent juice into the eyes of the fainting animal.* The tortured brute, bellowing with pain, makes a last expiring effort—he regains his feet—staggers on another half-mile—and sinks to rise no more.

"It was his fate!" remarks the self-satisfied Hindoo, as he leisurely unstraps the heavy burden from the back of the dying brute, and distributes it among the other bullocks of the drove.

And satisfied that he has done his duty towards the sacred animal, because he refrains from cutting its throat, and leaves it to die a *natural* death ; he proceeds on his journey, giving thanks to Vishnoo that he is not a slayer of oxen like

* To some of my readers this piece of cold-blooded cruelty will appear almost incredible ; but I regret to say that I have more than once seen it practised.

the accursed Kaffers,* whose beards he defiles. The vultures, indeed—those sons of unclean mothers—*may* pick out the unfortunate bullock's eyes; or some unbelieving Kaffer *may* choose to run the risk of eternal damnation by blowing its brains out; but that is no business of his, he is a good Hindoo; and, happen what will, the sin of slaying the blessed animal lies not at his door.

Strange inconsistency!—Yet so it is, and so it ever will be, where priestcraft and superstition reign triumphant.

We made an excellent supper of our jungle-fowl stewed in rice; but did not pass a very comfortable night. The ground was remarkably hard and rather stony withal; the tent was so small that my brother and I were obliged to lie with our legs outside; and we were kept awake a great part of the night by the noisy mirth of a pack of debauched jackals, holding carnival over the carcass of a dead bullock. A tiger also prowled round the tent for several hours.

I remarked that shortly before the tiger commenced his serenade, and during the time he remained near us, the jackals were comparatively mute; and the few that ventured to give utterance to their feelings, changed their notes from the usual cry—compounded of dismal lamentations and peals of mocking laughter—to a peculiar whining sycophantic tone, better suited to the august presence of their lord and master; and I am told that whenever the jackal is heard to utter this peculiar cry, it is an infallible sign that a tiger, or some other large beast of prey, is in the neighbourhood.

Just after I had fallen asleep, I was awakened by hearing a noise as if some animal were crunching bones in the interior of the tent. I raised myself on my elbow to ascertain the

* 'Kaffer'—a term of reproach applied to Europeans, Pariahs, and other unbelievers.

cause, and by the light of the moon I discovered an audacious jackal, who had probably been attracted by the savoury smell of our stew, quietly seated on his haunches, and devouring the remains of our supper, that had been left in a corner of the tent. He did not wait for a formal ejectment; but sprang over my legs, and made his escape before I could lay my hand on any weapon wherewith to smite him.

March 12th.—Started at daybreak, and rode twenty miles to Ussinwarry, a village on the banks of a small river that flows into the sea near Goa. Our route, for the greater part of the distance, lay through heavy bamboo jungle; along a narrow rugged path, where our horses had considerable difficulty in keeping their footing, and were once or twice nearly swamped in crossing deep muddy ravines.

Just as we were starting, we met a small detachment of the 20th regiment, on their march from Bombay to Belgaum. They informed us that they had been encamped on the opposite side of the village; and that during the night a tiger had entered their camp, and attacked a baggage camel, which he wounded so severely that they were obliged to kill it. The tiger would not quit his prey till they had fired ten rounds of ball-cartridge at him; and, after all, made off with an unfortunate dog belonging to one of the men.

On our way we killed a large snake, which I conclude belongs to a rare species, as none of us had ever seen one of a similar kind. It was upwards of sixteen feet in length, and quite as thick as a man's thigh. The upper part of the body was a dark slate-colour, nearly black, and the skin rough, without any lustre; the scales on the belly light gray or lead-colour, and the head large and flattened.

The natives declared him to be a venomous snake, and were much horrified at our venturing to touch him; but I

think they must have been mistaken, for I never heard of a snake of this size being armed with venomous fangs; and on examining the mouth, I could not discover any; however, as the head was beaten to a jelly, it was difficult to say whether they had ever existed or not.

We reached Ussinwarry about 11 A.M., after a hot and fatiguing march, and pitched our little tent under the shade of a beautiful cocoa-nut grove on the bank of the river. Here we halted during the heat of the day; and employed ourselves in skinning the snake, and preparing some other specimens which we had procured for the Doctor on our way through the jungle.

Being at a loss for materials to stuff the snake, the Doctor had recourse to an ingenious expedient for preserving the skin; having stripped it off entire, like the skin of an eel, he filled it with fine sand, and laid it out in the sun, where it was thoroughly dried in a few hours; the sand, by its own weight, keeping it stretched to its full extent, and at the same time absorbing all the fat that exuded from it.

We leave our horses here to await our return, and have hired a boat, manned by two native fishermen, to take us down the river to Goa.

Goa, March 13*th.*—We embarked yesterday evening in a very clumsy antediluvian-looking canoe, large enough to contain us with all our servants and baggage. As we had only two men to paddle the whole distance—somewhere between forty and fifty miles—our progress was, of necessity, slow. But by dint of persevering industry on the part of our hardy boatmen, who never relaxed their exertions for one moment, we accomplished the voyage in sixteen hours, and landed here about 10 A.M. On our way down the river we saw several otters, which are said to be numerous in this part

of the country, but did not succeed in procuring a specimen.

We took up our quarters near the convent of Cabou, in an empty barrack that was erected during the Peninsular war, when we occupied Goa in trust for our ally Don Juan of Portugal; but which is now used as a bungalow for European travellers. It is situated on a high promontory, clothed with brushwood, near the entrance of the harbour, and commands a magnificent view. At first the large, empty, barn-like building had rather a cheerless effect. But the Doctor, who is an old traveller as well as an old soldier, soon changed the aspect of affairs.

The 'cunnauts,' or canvas walls of a tent, were stretched across the empty building, so as to screen off the portion required for our accommodation; a couple of camp-tables and three chairs were arranged; the tablecloth was spread, and the cowrie-baskets, containing a tongue and cold roasted peafowl, a salted buffalo's hump, a loaf of bread, and some bottles of pale ale, were unpacked. By the time these arrangements were completed, the peon, whom we had dispatched in search of provisions, returned with a plentiful supply of oysters, fresh fish, and eggs; and in less than two hours after our arrival, we sat down to a sumptuous breakfast in as snug a little barrack-room as any one need wish for.

Just before breakfast we were waited upon by one of the Franciscan friars belonging to the convent, who politely invited us to visit the establishment, and inspect the paintings, relics, etc. This we promised to do in the course of the day, and in the meantime asked him to share our repast—an invitation which he accepted with a profusion of thanks.

In outward appearance our guest did not at all come up to my preconceived notions of a 'jolly Friar,' although he

eventually proved himself to be one, in every sense of the word. He was the image of the starved apothecary in 'Romeo and Juliet,'—a living skeleton, with a skin sallow as old parchment—and looked like abstinence, famine, and mortification of the flesh personified. His shaven crown and sandalled feet, the coarse brown tunic bound round his lean flanks with a girdle of knotted cord, and his hypocritical look of mock humility, completely imposed on us. We pitied the poor man, and said to ourselves, Here is one at least who is dead to the world with all its pomps and vanities.

The kind-hearted Doctor, ever thoughtful about others, happening to remember that this was the middle of Lent, and fearful of hurting the feelings of the holy man, desired that nothing but eggs and fish might be placed on the breakfast table. We were hardly seated, however, when the nostrils of our holy friend began to expand; and after snuffing round the room, he made a dead point at the cold peafowl and buffalo's hump, which, out of delicacy to his feelings, had been kept in the background.

He did not wait to be asked; but with watering lips desired the heretical food to be placed before him, and falling-to as if he had not seen meat for a month—as I dare say was really the case—he caused the viands to disappear with a rapidity that was marvellous to behold.

"Well," thought we, "this is an easy-going priest—at least as far as keeping Lent is concerned."

But seeing by the poor devil's face that he was absolutely in want of nourishment, and fancying that so good an opportunity of enjoying one substantial meal in the midst of a long black Lent, had proved too strong a temptation for his famished virtue to resist, we heretics thought lightly of the transgression, and still considered him a holy man.

Having appeased the cravings of hunger—an operation in which he consumed a larger quantity of food than I thought his lean carcass was capable of containing—he solaced himself by smoking some half-dozen cheroots; and whistling to a little bandy-legged turnspit, rejoicing in the name of 'Cupid,' and who, in humble imitation of his master, had been making the most of his time under the table, he departed to his devotions, after accepting an invitation to dine with us.

We still thought the priest a devout priest.

In the course of the day we visited the convent of Cabou, which is rather a poor one, and presents nothing worthy of notice, except some curious old paintings, which I shall have occasion to mention hereafter. We shot a few couple of quail in the neighbouring brushwood; and after a refreshing swim in the salt water, returned to dinner.

Punctual to a moment, our friend the Friar arrived, attended by his bandy-legged cur, both looking fearfully hungry. We received our guest with a polite 'Salve domine,' and proceeded at once to business, for he was evidently in no mood for dalliance. This time we had no scruples about the meat; neither had our holy friend. He fed like an ogre; glass after glass of the excellent port wine, for which Goa is celebrated, vanished down his long skinny throat; and still he ate, and still he drank, till the Doctor, who watched the extraordinary performance with evident interest, began to have serious apprehensions for his safety.

At length, after partaking of every dish at the table, he appeared to discover that man's powers are limited; and finally broke down in the midst of a savoury mess of pillaw, the remains of which, however, he could not see depart without a profound sigh of regret.

The cloth being removed, cheroots lighted, and fresh glasses

produced, our friend stroked his stomach complacently, and filling a bumper of claret, begged leave to propose a toast.

"England and Portugal, with all the honours!"

"Hip! hip! hip! Hurra!"

"Delicious claret!—a perfect bouquet. Another bumper, my children! Wellington and Don Miguel!"

"Hurra! Hurra!! Hurra!!!"

The Doctor, ever ready for a bit of fun, rubbed his hands with delight at discovering such convivial qualities in our clerical guest, and concluded a high-flown eulogium on the Portuguese nation in general, and Portuguese priests in particular, by proposing that our jolly friend should take the chair.

This motion was carried by acclamation; and the shaven-headed Friar, after a decent show of resistance, was duly installed in an arm-chair at the head of the table. He could not speak a word of English, nor could any of us understand a syllable of Portuguese; but with the aid of a little bad French, and a great deal of execrable dog-Latin, we managed to get on to our entire satisfaction.

Toast after toast was given by our excellent chairman, and the bottle circulated freely. At length the generous wine began to warm the heart of the jolly Friar; and filling a larger bumper than usual, he begged to propose a toast, which he felt assured must ever be drunk with enthusiasm either by churchman or layman.

"Wine and women, my children, with nine times nine!!!"

Oh, ho! master Priest!

We now began to smell a rat; and, I am ashamed to say, we availed ourselves of the Friar's communicative mood, to extract from him some of the secrets of his prison-house. To this he appeared nothing loath, and that pawkie loon, the

Doctor, soon succeeded in drawing him out to our hearts' content.

"Weel done, Padre!" exclaimed the Doctor, slapping him on the shoulder, and speaking a confused jargon of broad Scotch, French, and Latin, which, however, we shall translate into the Doctor's vernacular. "I see ye hae a warm heart to the lasses—and what for no? I'm sure ye maun hae a wheen bonny black-eyed lasses among your congregation down by in Goa?"

The padre grinned, and replied that some of the lambs of the flock were very fair to look upon.

"Wi' a wolf in sheep's clothing to tak' care o' them," whispered the Doctor, aside.

Then addressing the Friar:

"Indeed, sir? Weel, I think it maun be a pleasant thing to hae charge o' a flock o' thae kind o' lambs. I'se warrant, noo, you're very kind to the poor young things; and I daresay ye whiles gie them a bit faitherly kiss—just to encourage them like—when they come to ask pardon for some o' their little follies and weaknesses?"

The jolly Friar's eye twinkled at this suggestion, and he appeared half-inclined to own the soft impeachment; but prudence got the better of vanity.

"Weel, weel, Padre, never mind; ye shouldna kiss and tell, they say." Then aside to us—"He's no half-primed yet; we'll gi'e him anither glass or twa."

And suiting the action to the word, the Doctor pushed the bottle towards the Friar, requesting him to fill a bumper to their better acquaintance.

A few more toasts enabled the Doctor to complete his task of pumping the priest. He waxed garrulous as the fumes of the claret mounted to his brain, and let out secrets enough to

damn fifty friars instead of one; the Doctor all the time laughing in his sleeve at the success of his cross-questioning, and remarking to us in an under-tone, that if the sinner were telling truth, "he thought very little o' the taste o' the Portuguese lasses to tak' up wi' a poor feckless craiter that a Scotch lass wouldna' condescend to touch wi' a pair o' tangs."

The padre was particularly eloquent in praise of female beauty; and, as he warmed on the subject, proceeded from generals to particulars; describing in glowing language the various charms of some female friends, with whom he gave us to understand he was on terms of the greatest intimacy. But these particulars are hardly fit for publication.

We were now satisfied that our friend was a queer priest; but that was no business of ours. He sang a good song; and although the large potations in which he indulged had affected his head a little, he behaved on the whole with tolerable propriety. He, however, proceeded from bad to worse; and at last became so riotously drunk, and sang such songs—substituting the most obscene words for the text of a book of sacred music which he produced—that we could no longer tolerate his ribaldry—I may say blasphemy—and were finally obliged to turn him out of doors.

But although I consider it quite fair to expose the vices of so debauched a character as this Franciscan friar proved himself to be; I must say, in justice to the church of which he was an unworthy member, that from others who have visited Goa, I have always heard an excellent character of the priesthood; and I therefore hope, in the spirit of charity, that the disgraceful conduct of our friend the jolly Friar formed a rare exception to the general rule.

I need hardly add that, during the few days we remained at Goa, we never heard more of our friend; nor did we see

a single individual belonging to the convent outside the walls.

Goa, March 14th.—We devoted to-day to visiting the towns of Old and New Goa.

Old Goa, of which nothing now remains but convents, churches, and the inquisition—which, thanks to the march of intellect, is now closed, like a manufactory that can no longer furnish employment for its workmen—is situated some miles further up the river than the modern town. It was founded by the great Alphonso Albuquerque, several years after the discovery of India by Vasco de Gama, who formed the first Portuguese settlement at Calicut about the year 1506. But the situation proving unhealthy, it was afterwards abandoned; and the seat of government removed to the modern town of New Goa. It was part of the policy of Albuquerque to encourage intermarriage with the natives; and the result of this is still visible in the very dark complexion of the Portuguese inhabitants of Goa.

We hired a boat for the day; and on going down to the beach, where I expected to step into a clumsy native canoe, I was agreeably surprised to find a handsome six-oared cutter manned by a crew of strapping natives, neatly and uniformly dressed, in striped cotton shirts and trousers. They handled their oars in the European fashion; and pulled with a short, quick stroke, in time to a lively Portuguese air, which they sang in chorus, and really remarkably well. The cockswain, a very intelligent native—and evidently accustomed to act the part of cicerone—informed us that he and his crew were all Christians; and appeared to take great pride in describing the splendid churches and beautiful 'Swamies*—for so he termed the images of saints, etc.—which we should see at Old Goa.

* 'Swamies'—Hindoo idols.

The crew, who took as great a pride in their handsome boat as the cockswain did in his favourite 'Swamies,' laid down to their work in earnest, and urged her to do her best. The tough oars strained and buckled like whalebone. And the buoyant craft, skimming over the water like a flying fish, soon brought us alongside the landing-place at New Goa.

This is a poor, deserted-looking town, without any appearance of trade or bustle whatever; and a very slovenly man-of-war brig, with rusty sides, ill-squared yards, and knotted cordage, was the only vessel of any kind in the harbour. There are no wheeled carriages of any description in the settlement—all communication being carried on by water—and this probably accounts for the excellence of their boats, which are as fine craft of the kind as I have ever seen.

The male population of Goa give one the idea of an idle, indolent race; and the troops, both officers and men, are the most starved, ragged, broken-hearted looking wretches I ever met with. Their pay is hardly sufficient to keep body and soul together—that of a subaltern being, I believe, only £25 a year!—and they appear to have nothing on earth to do but smoke cheroots and twirl their thumbs; for they cannot afford to drink, and have not even a bridge to spit over. The officers we met with—listless, effeminate-looking creatures—were being carried about by two men, in a sort of hammock slung from a pole, with a large umbrella over their heads to protect them from the sun. In this machine they lie extended at full length, with one leg dangling lazily over the side, their eyes half-closed, and a cheroot in their mouth; and I am told that the greater part of their time is spent in the agreeable amusement of being thus carried about, with no other object in view than that of obtaining a certain quantity of air and exercise—if this style of locomotion can be called exercise—

with the smallest possible degree of bodily fatigue ; and this in a country swarming with game ! But there is no accounting for taste.

The women, although dark, are good-looking ; and judging from some bewitching black eyes that smiled upon us from the latticed balconies, I am inclined to fancy that some of the ladies must be remarkably handsome. Indeed, they have the character of being so ; and are said to be ladylike and agreeable. The dear creatures are also remarkably fond of the society of Englishmen ; a taste which I can perfectly understand after the specimens I have seen of their lords and masters.

Having devoted an hour to rambling over the town—in which, with the exception of some tantalizing glimpses of the dark-eyed signoras, we discovered little worth seeing—we re-embarked, and proceeded to visit the churches and convents of Old Goa.

This, once the seat of a powerful government—and still retaining traces of its former grandeur, in the number and magnificence of its churches and monasteries—has now become a mere nest of drones ; a colony of idle monks and nuns, who, without contributing anything to the public welfare, live like locusts on the fat of the land ; and swallow up any little profit that might otherwise be derived from the Portuguese possessions in India.

On the whole, I was disappointed in the churches. They are on a grand scale certainly ; and they are interesting from the association of ideas connected with them ; but their white-washed walls and red-tiled roofs deprive them of all architectural beauty externally ; and although the interior of most of them is as splendid as paint and gilding can make them, there is a want of good taste pervading the whole that is painful to behold.

Crucifixes, for instance, and other figures really well carved, are daubed with paint, or tricked out with scarfs of silk and gold lace, till they appear perfectly ridiculous. In one corner is an image of the Virgin, dressed in an old-fashioned brocade petticoat and hoop; and in another stands a crucifix as large as life—the handiwork apparently of some inspired ship-carpenter—who, not satisfied with painting it an unwholesome white, has daubed it over with ghastly streaks of blood. Cherubim, evidently by the same artist—leering, squinting little wretches—with elaborately-curled wigs, inflamed cheeks, and snub-noses, meet you at every turn. Handsome stone pillars are daubed over with a wretched imitation of coloured marble; and beautifully-carved oak roofs are whitewashed. And yet all that bad taste can effect has failed to deprive these once noble buildings of a certain air of magnificence, inseparably connected with their gigantic proportions. It is impossible to resist the first impulse of admiration on entering them; and not to experience a feeling of one's own insignificance, where man dwindles to a pigmy amidst their massive pillars and stupendous domes.

Our cockswain acted the part of cicerone to admiration, and amused us much by his remarks. He evidently looked upon the 'swamies' as the objects best worthy of attention; and took great pains to explain to us their relative value and different virtues.

"This," said he, as we passed the image of St. Peter, "this very good 'swamy.' That"—pointing to the image of our Saviour—"good 'swamy' too. These," indicating the red-face cherubims, "very small swamies, not too much good. But this," said he—approaching the gaily-dressed figure of the Virgin, before which a lamp was burning, and regarding it with profound reverence—"this very great 'swamy!' Virgin

Mary 'swamy!' Too much fine 'swamy!' All good Christian pray to this 'swamy!'" and bending his knee, he crossed himself devoutly.

Poor fellow; he called himself a Christian, and believed himself to be one; but I fear he looked not beyond external objects, and had merely abandoned the worship of one description of idol to prostrate himself before another.

The inquisition is a dark gloomy building, filled with recollections of fearful interest. As we passed through the dungeons and inspected the various instruments—constructed with diabolical ingenuity, for the purpose of inflicting on the human frame the greatest possible variety of torture—I pictured to myself the fearful tragedies that have been acted within these walls, and felt devoutly thankful that such atrocities are no longer permitted.

A sinister-looking priest, however, who acted as our guide, appeared to think—as he eyed us askance, and closed the door with a sigh—what a pity it was that so much valuable machinery should be allowed to rust for want of use, while heretics were so plenty in the land.

"But fortunate for us, friend," thought I, as I called to mind the scene of the previous evening, and fancied, if we had been the cause of bringing such scandal on the church in the good old persecuting times, what glorious subjects we would have been upon which to practise a few interesting experiments in the art of torture.

We visited several convents of monks, but were not permitted to see the nuns.

In the convents there is little worthy of notice, except some curious old paintings, similar to those we saw at Cabou. As works of art they are mere daubs; but they are interesting from their antiquity; and the quaint ideas embodied in some

of them. The favourite subject appears to be the supposed martyrdom of the early Portuguese Christians in India. And baldheaded friars meet the eye at every turn, in the act of being speared, beheaded, drowned, strangled, crucified, empaled, roasted, and flayed alive, by Brahmin priests of most ferocious aspect.

I shall only attempt to describe two out of many that tickled my fancy particularly.

One represents a friar of the order of St. Francis, standing upright as a soldier on parade, and in the act of being beheaded by an unrelenting Brahmin. His head is flying off at a right angle, grinning fearfully; and from the trunk issues a jet of blood, in the centre of which appears his soul, represented by a thing with a large head, intended, no doubt, for a cherub, but which bears a painful resemblance to one of those little *bottle-imps*, preserved in spirits, which we see in surgical museums. The thing with the large head is making frantic efforts to escape being drowned in the crimson fountain; and appears to be calling lustily for help to a group of angels who are hovering above, ready to invest it with the crown of martyrdom. The idea is a good one enough, and the moral excellent. But there is something so irresistibly grotesque in the attitudes of the principal figures; and the grinning head is represented as eyeing the little misshapen soul with such an envious glance; that it is impossible to behold the composition of the quaint old artist without a smile.

The other picture represents a miracle performed in behalf of St. Francis Xavier, the apostle of the Indies. St. Xavier is represented as walking on the sea-beach; and a large crab, issuing from the water, makes a profound reverence with one claw, while with the other he presents the saint with a silver

crucifix, which it appears he—the saint—had dropped overboard during his outward voyage—*before rounding the Cape!*

During the time we remained at Goa, we made an excursion along the coast to the neighbouring village of Seroda, inhabited by a remarkable race of women, who are celebrated throughout the western parts of India, for their great beauty and unusually fair complexion. They are Hindoos of the Conkany caste, but differ in many respects from any other tribe. They are not allowed to marry, nor are any men, except the priest, belonging to the pagodas—of which there are several in the village—allowed to reside within its precincts. They are, however, encouraged to become mothers; and like the Amazonian queen—who is said to have visited Alexander the Great, in hopes of thereby obtaining an heroic daughter—they are very particular in selecting fathers, likely from their appearance to perpetuate in their children the fair complexion and classical features for which they themselves are so justly celebrated. I was not able to ascertain how the male children are disposed of; but I believe they are dedicated to the temples, and become priests; while the females—or perhaps only the finer specimens, for all the children we saw were strikingly handsome—are reared with the utmost care to sustain the character of this village of Houris. Their origin is shrouded in mystery; but tradition says they are sprung from an ancient sisterhood of Portuguese nuns. A strange origin enough, if the tale be true.* They never leave their native village—which they appear to think the most delightful spot on earth;—and have a superstitious belief that

* The origin of this establishment is due to the proselytizing spirit of the Portuguese, who, having proscribed idolatry in the settlement of Goa, demolished all the Hindoo temples, and sent the dancing-girls attached to each to Seroda, where they now form a great colony of Bayaderes.—W. E.

if they were to ascend above the Ghauts they would immediately die.

On landing near the village we pitched our tent on the beach; and, in accordance with the etiquette of the place, we despatched a messenger to announce our arrival. We were soon after waited upon by a deputation of smiling nymphs, who in the most graceful manner expressed their thanks for the honour we had done them; and informed us they were charged with a message from the matron of the village, requesting the pleasure of our company in the evening to witness a 'nautch;'* and after throwing a garland of flowers round each of our necks, they returned to the village.

I was much struck with the grace and beauty of these young creatures. They were nearly as fair as Europeans, with beautifully regular features; and their deep blue melting eyes, fringed with long silken eyelashes, were perfectly bewitching. It was that peculiar eye—rare even in Europe, and unknown in any other part of India—which Byron so beautifully describes as

> The Asiatic eye,
> Dark as above us is the sky;
> But through it steals a tender light,
> Like the first moonrise of midnight;
> Large, dark, and swimming in the stream,
> Which seems to melt in its own beam;
> All love, half languor and half fire.

Their figures were more stately, and their limbs fuller and better rounded, than those of Indian females generally are; and their peculiar dress—a flowing robe confined round the waist by a silver zone, and looped up on one side so as to expose the leg to a little above the knee—closely resembled the drapery of an ancient Greek statue. Their hair, simply

* 'Nautch'—a native ballet, or exhibition of dancing-girls.

braided, was entwined with wreaths of jessamine, and secured behind with a gold bodkin. And the general effect of their charms was not a little heightened by the unaffected sweetness and simple modesty of their demeanour. For, notwithstanding their strange customs—shocking to our ideas of propriety, but considered perfectly proper by them—the poor things retain all the native modesty of their sex, and are not by any means meretricious in their behaviour.*

In the cool of the evening we proceeded to the village, on the outskirts of which we were met by another deputation of the fair inhabitants, and conducted to the house of the head matron.

The village is beautifully situated in a grove of orange, citron, and palm trees, through which the soft sea-breeze comes laden with perfume; a beautiful salt-water lagoon, wooded to the edge, sweeps by in front of it; and in the background the deep blue mountains appear to form a barrier between this enchanting spot and the remainder of the world.

We were received with great ceremony by the matron, and all the beauties of the village, in a large open apartment, where we were sprinkled with rose-water, and regaled with tea. We then seated ourselves round the room to witness the performance of some 'nautch-girls' belonging to the temple; and departed at a late hour, after distributing some little presents, such as embroidered slippers, bangles, etc., among the fairest of our fair entertainers, and taking a sketch of a beautiful creature named Biaca. On the opposite page is a fac-simile of a beautiful drawing, by Noel Paton, taken from my original sketch, which gives a very fair idea of the style of beauty of the charming 'Biaca.'

* I fear this is all changed now. Seroda has become too well known; and I am told the fair inhabitants are sadly demoralised.

After spending two days here we started on our return to Dharwar, and it was with feelings of pleasure that I once more mounted my gallant gray, and felt that his first exulting bound dispelled all the dangerous fascinations which the enervating climate of Seroda, and the seducing beauty of its fair inhabitants, had thrown around me.

"Weel, lads," said the Doctor, as we jogged along, "what div you think of Seroda? It's no ill quarters for a wee while; but what wi' thae rampaugin priests and bonnie lasses, it wadna answer for you young chaps to bide there ower lang. 'Od, a week o't wad spoil the best man in Scotland!"

We halted a couple of days at Belgaum, and the night before we left it sent on a spare horse each, to serve as a relay for next morning. On their way through the jungle they were attacked by a couple of contumacious bears, and one of them so severely wounded that his life was despaired of for some days. This is a curious fact illustrative of the nature of the Indian bear. I know many instances of bears attacking a single man without provocation; but I never, before nor since, have heard of their venturing to attack so large a party; for besides the three horses, there were two servants on horseback, and two bullocks carrying our tents. The people of the neighbouring village tell us that for some time back they have been kept in constant alarm by the repeated visits of these bears, who are daily becoming more audacious; and that in the course of last week eight or ten persons have been attacked and nearly killed by them.

My brother and I have made a vow to revenge the insult offered to our steeds, and it shall go hard but we cry quits with master bruin, before he is many days older.

CHAPTER XII.

DHARWAR, AND A SECOND TRIP TO THE COAST.

I CONCLUDED the last chapter with a solemn vow of vengeance. The reader shall now be informed how that vow was kept.

Dharwar, March 20th.—Immediately on our return to Dharwar, we despatched scouts to scour the country and gain intelligence of the two bears that attacked our horses on the march from Belgaum; and this morning a messenger arrived with the gratifying intelligence that two bears of unusual size had been marked down on the side of a rocky hill about fifteen miles from hence.

My brother and I, accompanied by Dr. Macphee, immediately started on horseback, and fortunately reached the ground before the game had been disturbed. They were lying asleep in a snug corner under cover of a projecting rock, and might both have been despatched without trouble had it not been for the imprudence of the Doctor, who fired a charge of 'grit shot' into one of them before they were properly surrounded. The wounded bear started up with a loud roar, and made off at an awkward gallop; while his companion, putting her head between her legs, rolled over the edge of the rock, plunged into thick cover, and although pursued by the whole party except myself, succeeded in making her escape.

I gave chase to the wounded bear; and from knowing the country well, managed to head him by cutting across a shoulder of the hill. The moment I shewed myself the

animal rose upon his hind legs with a savage growl and prepared to do battle; but he had hardly expanded his broad chest, when he dropped at my feet with a bullet through his heart. He uttered one roar, the blood gushed in torrents from his mouth, and sinking to the ground with his head between his fore-paws, as if composing himself to sleep, he expired without a struggle.

We now commenced a tedious chase after the bear that had escaped, and with infinite trouble succeeded in tracking her, through dense underwood, to another hill about a mile from the one on which she had been started.

Here we lost all traces of her amongst the rocks, but the nature of the ground afforded some clue to our farther search. The hill was composed of a rugged pile of enormous stones, intermixed with brushwood, and on the side to which we had carried the trail, presented a perpendicular face of scarped rock from thirty to forty feet high, along the face of which ran a ledge about two feet wide, which the natives informed us led to some deep fissures, likely to afford shelter to the hunted bear.

We now felt satisfied that we had tracked her to her lair, and laid our plans accordingly.

It was arranged that my brother and the Doctor should proceed along the ledge of the rock accompanied by a skilful tracker, while I guarded the only apparent outlet at the opposite extremity, and that the hunters who accompanied us should take up commanding positions on various parts of the hill, to observe the motions of the bear in case she attempted to break away by some other pass that might have escaped our notice.

I was making my way to my post, through the tangled brushwood that skirted the base of the rock, and my brother

had climbed some distance up the hill for the purpose of stationing the look-out men, when the Doctor, who had been left on the ledge at the top of the precipice, moved forward a few paces to obtain a view beyond a projecting point of rock that concealed the remainder of the rugged pathway. He had hardly thrust his long neck beyond the impediment, when he drew back with an exclamation of astonishment, and levelling his long fusee, shouted at the top of his voice—

"Come here, some o' you, come here! The deevil is grinning in my very face."

I could not, from where I stood, command a view of the bear; but judging from the direction of the Doctor's fusee, as he brought the sight to bear upon her, it appeared that she could not be more than forty yards from him.

"Hold your hand, Doctor!" cried my brother; "till I get down to you."

"I canna," exclaimed the Doctor, in despairing accents; "the rampaugin deevil is coming at me with every hair on her back standing on end, and she's amaist at the grippin' o' me."

"Reserve your fire then till she is close to you, and make sure work of it."

But the words were hardly uttered when Mons Meg exploded with her usual cannon-like report, making the Doctor stagger back from the violence of the recoil; and the bear, uttering a savage roar, rushed forward at a charging pace.

She was evidently hard hit, for her fore-quarters were streaming with blood, but she was still strong and active.

I fired the moment she came in sight, but with unsteady aim, for the bullet, rebounding from a rock under her feet, went whistling idly over the hill.

"The spare gun—the spare gun, ye damned black pagan!"

shouted the Doctor, holding out his discharged weapon with one hand to fend off the enraged bear, and extending the other behind him to grasp the spare gun carried by his attendant. But the cowardly knave had fled at the first appearance of danger, and was already a hundred yards from the spot.

The bear was now pressing hard upon the Doctor, and seizing the barrel of the gun in her teeth wrenched it out of his hands. Another moment and his head would have been between her jaws ; but the Doctor, with wonderful presence of mind, sprung boldly over the precipice, alighting on the top of a thick bush which broke his fall, and although stunned and bleeding, he reached the ground without sustaining any material injury. The bear to our astonishment took the leap without hesitation, and was on the point of seizing her unresisting victim, when my brother, who had by this time reached the platform overhead, levelled his rifle with his usual coolness, and the shot was answered by a hoarse bubbling cry that relieved my mind from a load of anxiety ; for although I could neither see the Doctor nor the bear, owing to the thick underwood that intervened, I knew well from that peculiar cry that the death-shot had been administered.

On reaching the spot where the Doctor lay I found him just recovering his senses, and struggling violently to disengage himself from the carcass of the bear, which was lying across him quite dead with his cap firmly grasped between her jaws. It appeared that she was in the very act of seizing the Doctor by the head when my brother fired with such beautiful coolness and precision. The ball passed through her heart, and she fell dead with the cap in her mouth, leaving the head uninjured. The poor Doctor was so stunned and confused that it was some time before we could make him understand that his formidable antagonist was actually dead ;

and he sat for at least ten minutes, gazing in stupified wonder at her bleeding carcass, before he could find words to return thanks for his almost miraculous escape.

Thus fell the two noted bears of Gurrug, and thus was our vow of vengeance accomplished.

Soon after the above adventure, my brother and I, accompanied by the Doctor and a young civilian, made another excursion to the western coast, where we had good sport as usual. But as my readers have had more than a fair proportion of sporting adventures lately, I shall confine my extracts from the notes taken on this occasion to the description of a 'suttee,' or self-immolation of a Hindoo widow, which we happened to witness.

The 'suttee' took place at a village a few miles from our camp, and horrible as it may sound to stand by and see a fellow-creature—a woman—burnt to death; yet my brother and the young civilian, being the only magistrates in the neighbourhood, considered it their duty to attend the ceremony, in hopes of dissuading the infatuated victim from her purpose; or failing of this, at least to rescue her in the event of her springing off the pile; for if no Europeans were present, the brutal Brahmins would, under such circumstances, thrust her back into the flames; and instances have occurred where the woman's life has been saved by the interposition of a magistrate, even after the fatal pile had been lighted. When we arrived at the spot we found a number of Brahmins erecting the funeral pile close to the sea; and it excited feelings of unutterable disgust to see the relations of the unfortunate widow laughing and jesting as they arranged the horrid apparatus. They appeared to look forward with pleasure to the approaching tragedy; and no one seemed to bestow a thought on the fearful sufferings which the victim

of superstition must endure, ere the sacrifice was completed. The pile was composed of logs of wood interspersed with layers of dry straw, sugar-canes, and other combustibles; this was covered with a mat, and to render it still more inflammable, was saturated with 'ghee' or clarified butter. The height of the erection might be about four feet, the breadth being just sufficient to admit of two bodies lying side by side; and above it was a platform of dried wood so constructed as to fall upon the bodies as soon as the fire consumed the slight props by which it was supported.

After about two hours spent in building the pile, a confused din of trumpets and tomtoms announced the arrival of the widow, preceded by the corpse of her husband, and followed by a crowd of friends and relations. She was a beautiful young creature not more than eighteen or nineteen years of age, and my blood ran cold as I saw her led forth like a lamb to the slaughter. Much as I had heard of the courage displayed by Indian women in the act of self-immolation, I did not believe it possible that one so young and of so delicate a frame as the present victim, could behold the dreadful apparatus prepared for her destruction without a shudder. But no traces either of sorrow or of fear were visible on her placid countenance. She seemed to have taken leave of this world for ever, and to have fixed her every thought on the prospect of meeting her husband in eternity. Her pale interesting features gave the most perfect idea of resignation. And her firm step and self-possessed manner satisfied us that no exciting or stupifying drugs had been administered to prepare her for the awful ceremony.

We had come determined to save the poor creature if possible, and were more than ever anxious to do so now that we had seen her.

While the corpse was being prepared for the funeral pile, we insisted on being allowed an interview with the intended victim ; and made use of every argument we could think of to dissuade her from her purpose. We offered to make her a handsome allowance for life, and to protect her from the malice of the priests if she only consented to live. But all was of no avail. The accursed Brahmins had done their work too well.

If a widow refuses to sacrifice herself, those crafty hypocrites, those ministers of the devil, expel her from her caste with curses and ignominy ; she is looked upon as a degraded being ; she cannot marry again ; she becomes an outcast, shunned and despised by all ; and even her nearest relatives dare not countenance her. In the temples women are daily exhorted to this act of self-immolation, by promises of eternal happiness ; and threatened with poverty, scorn, and infamy, if they allow the natural love of life to prevail.

Is it then to be wondered at that poor, ignorant creatures, thus urged and threatened by a crafty priesthood, prefer death —even a fiery death on the funeral pile—to life purchased at such a price ?

The poor girl appeared grateful for the interest we took in her ; and a tear—the first we had seen her shed—trembled on her long silken eyelashes as she thanked us ; but her resolution remained unshaken. She presented each of us with a cocoa-nut, which she begged us to keep for her sake ; and waving her hand with the air of an inspired being, she motioned us to withdraw.

To my dying day I shall never forget that scene.

As we turned to depart, I saw a devilish smile of triumph steal over the countenance of the officiating priest.

The corpse having been stripped, and washed in the sea,

was stretched, naked as it was, upon the ground in front of the funeral pile; and the widow, seating herself at the head, prepared to take leave of her relations. It was very affecting to see her aged mother throw herself at her daughter's feet, kiss them, and bid her farewell.

The poor girl's firmness could not withstand this trial—she wept bitterly—but it was only for a moment. Waving her hand as if wishing to be left to her own thoughts, she appeared to forget everything upon earth, and with her face raised to heaven called incessantly on her gods. Her attitude was that of intense devotion; and except when disturbed by persons kissing her feet, or making her touch cocoa-nuts, which are then esteemed holy, she never moved a limb.

During this time the priests chanted passages from their sacred books, promising eternal happiness to their poor victim if she kept up her courage and completed the sacrifice. When they had finished, the corpse was laid upon the funeral pile, and the widow, unassisted, walked three times round it. Having completed the third round, her little brother knelt at her feet and kissed them, while her father poured oil upon her head; and the unfeeling monsters who surrounded her—many of them women—raised a joyful shout, mingled with peals of laughter, as if exulting at the near approach of the last awful ceremony. It was fearful to behold such hardness of heart, particularly among women.

The young widow's earthly career was now drawing rapidly to a close. A few moments more, and she would be suffering the most horrible of deaths. But her eye quailed not, nor did her lips quiver. She ascended the fatal pile as if it had been her bridal-bed; and stretching herself by the side of the loathsome corpse—already in an advanced stage of decay—she clasped it in her arms, and rested her beautiful

head on the breast, which was literally a weltering mass of corruption.

It was fearful to behold the living and the dead thus united; to contrast the rounded limbs and graceful figure of that fair girl, with the bloated, grinning corpse which she held in her embrace. My heart sickened at the sight, and a feeling of deadly faintness came over me; but I had strength to see the tragedy completed.

I was close to the pile, and watched the poor victim's countenance narrowly; it was pale as death, but perfectly placid. She never moved a muscle, and appeared more like a marble, or rather bronze, image than a living being. Even on the brink of eternity, with the prospect of so fearful a death before her eyes, the fortitude inspired by a blind and devoted superstition supported her through the trial.

When all the preparations were completed, a horrid yell was raised, and a number of men rushed, with lighted torches, towards the pile, shouting, dancing, and screaming like demons. In an instant the whole was in flames. Heaps of burning straw fell on the two bodies. The death-shriek of the wretched victim was drowned amidst the roar of a thousand voices. The bickering flames rose high above the pile. All was one glowing mass of fire, and the poor creature's sufferings were ended. Once I saw her struggle, but it was only for a moment, and dreadful though her agony must have been, it could not have lasted above a few seconds. The wind was high, and the dry wood burned with such fury, that in a few minutes, more than half of the pile was consumed, and no one would have guessed that two human bodies were smouldering in the midst of it.

As we turned to leave the accursed spot, the worthy Doctor, who had hitherto remained a silent but deeply-

affected spectator of the dreadful ceremony, found it impossible any longer to restrain his indignation, and striding up to the principal Brahmin, he gave vent to his outraged feelings, by damning him to his heart's content in choice Malabar, of all known languages the one most abounding in powerful anathemas.

The haughty Brahmin, accustomed to lord it over the timid Hindoo, stood perfectly aghast at being thus bearded, in presence of his disciples, by an unbelieving Kaffer. He was 'something more than wrath,' and would doubtless have roasted poor Macphee alive had he possessed the power to do so. As it was, he had to brook the insult as best he might; while the Doctor, spitting on the ground in token of his utter disgust, thrust his hands deep into his pockets, and walked away evidently much relieved by this outpouring of his wrath.

Since the time I write of, the Indian Government have, on the principle of 'better late than never,' succeeded in putting a stop to these barbarous sacrifices. But I look upon it as a lasting disgrace to the British Nation, that such diabolical cruelty should have been so long tolerated.

It used to be said, that it might endanger the country to interfere with the superstitious observances of the natives. A feeble excuse for still more feeble policy. Did we not, many years before, when our hold upon the country was much less firm than at the time I write of, put a stop to the unnatural practice of sacrificing female children? And what dangerous consequences ensued? None whatever; the mass of the people blessed us for our interference. Why then were 'suttees' tolerated? Who were the instigators and perpetrators of those heathenish rites? A very small proportion of the population. None but high-caste Brahmins burned their

widows; and had we then, as we have now, declared any one guilty of murder who assisted at such a ceremony, or, by threats or promises, instigated others to do so, we should not only have acted a manly and a Christian part, but have saved thousands of victims from a miserable death; and, as the result proves, without in the slightest degree diminishing our influence in the country.*

On our way back from the coast, we made a detour to the northward; and at Meritch met Lord Clare, the Governor of Bombay, who was making a progress through the southern Mahratta country, to visit the native chiefs.

To those who delight in barbarous pageantry, this would have been a fine opportunity for indulging their propensity. The whole country appeared to keep holiday; and 'durbars' and processions were of daily and hourly occurrence.

The Rajah of Kolapoor, almost the last prince of the once powerful Mahratta race, and the only one whose court still flourishes in the true semibarbarous style, was one of many whom we visited. He is a little, black, vulgar-looking man; and his court, like that of most Indian Princes, exhibits a curious mixture of magnificence and tawdry finery. He received us most graciously, and did his best to amuse us with nautches, reviews, and hunting-parties.

I have, in a previous chapter, described the method of running down antelope with hunting-leopards, which is the rajah's favourite sport, but one not at all suited to my taste. The reviews were more interesting, and I was much pleased with the gallant bearing of the Mahratta horsemen.

They are fine-looking men, well mounted on tall, active,

* Not Brahmins only, but all Rajpoots, and generally the Mahrattas, and many other castes, used to practise this horrid rite. One class in the southern Mahratta country—the Lingayats—buried their widows alive.—W. E.

native horses, and armed with a sword, and a lance about twelve feet long. In the use of this latter weapon, they are unrivalled, and in their exercises perform feats which, to those who have not witnessed them, must sound almost incredible; that of picking up a tent-peg on the point of a lance struck me as one of the most extraordinary. A tent-peg, as thick as a man's arm, and upwards of two feet long, is driven firmly into the ground, till only a few inches remain above the surface, and a man exerting his utmost strength cannot pull it up. The horseman rides past this at speed, and striking it with the point of the lance, jirks it out of the ground, and carries it off.

By what peculiar knack a man is enabled to do this with a slender bamboo spear, I never could understand; but it appears to be done without any effort on the part of the horseman, and almost invariably at the first attempt.

CHAPTER XIII.

BISON-SHOOTING.

During our sporting excursions in India, although hunting in all its branches was our principal object, yet it was not our only one. We took quite as much pleasure in studying the habits and natural history of the various animals we met with as in the chase; and although my notes on these interesting subjects are not so scientific as I could wish, they may nevertheless afford some points of interest to the naturalist, if not to the general reader. I have, in two former chapters, given some account of the antelope and the tiger; and shall devote this chapter to a few remarks on that rare animal, the Indian bison, with the three varieties of deer found in the western provinces, viz., the sambar or great rusa-deer, the cheetle or spotted-deer, and the muntjak or rib-faced deer.

The Indian bison, gaour, or jungle koolgah of the natives (*bos gaurus* of Cuvier?), is one of the largest known animals of the genus *Bos*. It has hitherto, I believe, been found only in the heavy forest jungles of the peninsula of India, where the wild buffalo is unknown; and I have never heard of its being discovered in the more northern provinces, where wild buffaloes abound.

I have been told that a species of wild ox, closely resembling the Indian bison, is found in the forests of the Burmese Empire; but, from the descriptions I have had of this animal, I am inclined to think it must be the gayal (*bos gavæus*), a smaller and much less formidable animal than the one at present under our notice.

The extreme wildness of the Indian bison, together with the unhealthy nature of the jungle which he inhabits, rendering the pursuit of him a work of considerable difficulty and even of danger, his natural history and habits are as yet but imperfectly known to naturalists; and by European sportsmen he is very generally confounded with the wild buffalo, an animal to which he does not bear the slightest resemblance either in habits or appearance. The only preserved specimen I have ever seen of this animal is a young one, a very poor specimen, that has lately been added to the collection in the British Museum.

In the English edition of Cuvier,* the reader will find the only description I have ever met with, in any work on natural history, of the gaur (*bos gaurus*), which, from several peculiarities therein mentioned, I conceive to be the same animal of which we are now treating.

My own description of this animal was noted down on the spot, from two good specimens, male and female. They were shot near the village of Dandilly, about thirty miles west from Dharwar, in the heavy forest jungle which clothes the Western Ghauts. The following are the accurate dimensions of the two animals. The measurements were taken immediately after death, and without following the curve of the body. The length was taken with a tape, between two upright sticks, one placed at the nose and the other at the insertion of the tail; the height was measured, in like manner, from the spurious hoof of the foreleg to the top of the shoulder, the measurement of the foot being omitted, to allow for the diminution in the length of the limb, which would be occasioned by the weight of the animal when standing:—

* Cuvier's Animal Kingdom, by Griffith, 1827, vol. iv. p. 399.

Skull of Bison
(Very old Bull with broken horn)

Young Cow
(showing arch of forehead)

		Ft.	in.		Ft.	in.
Height at the shoulder . .	Bull	6	1	Cow	5	5
Height to top of dorsal ridge .	„	6	5	„	5	10
Height at rump . . .	„	5	5			
Length from nose to insertion of tail	„	9	0	„	8	5
Length of tail . . .	„	2	8			
Girth of body behind shoulder	„	8	0			
Girth of foreleg above the knee	„	2	6	„	2	0
Girth of neck . . .	„	4	3			
Breadth of forehead . .	„	1	3½			

I had no means of weighing the animals; but judging from the weight of the bull's head, which was as much as two men could conveniently carry, slung between them on a bamboo, it must be enormous. I only know of one bull having been killed of greater size than the one from which the above measurements were taken. He stood six feet two inches at the shoulder, and was otherwise large in proportion; but not having been present at his death, I have no memorandum of his dimensions except the height. I saw his skull, which greatly exceeded in size any one I have ever met with. He was said to be a very old animal and remarkably savage.

The head of the Indian bison is more square, and shorter in proportion, than that of the common ox; and the chaffron, particularly in the male animal, is considerably arched, like that of a ram. The forehead is broad, the frontal bone slightly concave, and surmounted by a thick ridge of solid bone, rising in the form of an arch between the horns and overhanging the forehead—a striking peculiarity, sufficient of itself to distinguish the skull of the Indian bison from that of any other animal of the same genus. The horns—one foot three inches apart at the base—spring out from each side of the head with a sweep in continuation of the arched bony ridge, rather inclining backwards, and curving upwards and inwards, the points approaching each other directly over the base of the

skull, in such a position that they cannot be rendered available for the purpose of goring; it is therefore probable that the bison makes more use of his massive well-protected skull than of his horns in combat; only one instance has come under my observation of a man having been killed by a bison, and on this occasion the victim was crushed to death against a tree by the broad forehead of the animal.

The horns are of a light gray colour tipped with black, rather short, and exceedingly thick at the base. The forehead above the eyes is covered with a thick coat of hair of a light cream colour, which, below the eyes, shades into a deep brown, approaching to black. The muzzle is large and full. Eye small, and of a light-blue colour, which gives the animal a remarkable appearance. The tongue is extremely rough and covered with sharp papillæ, which turn backwards; the palate, which is white, is also armed with papillæ. The neck is short, thick, and heavy; and in the male is protected by large folds of skin. The skin on the neck, shoulders, and thighs, is almost as thick as that of the rhinoceros, and, like it, is much prized by the natives for the purpose of making shields; some idea of its thickness may be formed from the fact that a green bull's hide is considered a heavy load for a stout bullock. The dewlap is small in the male, and hardly perceptible in the female; shoulder very deep and muscular; chest broad; forelegs short, although from the great depth of shoulder the animal stands much higher before than behind; forearm extremely large (2 feet 6 inches in circumference), but the leg below the knee fine like that of a deer. The hoofs, jet black, finely formed and hard as iron, are small in proportion to the size of the animal, although considerably larger than those of a common ox. Behind the neck, and immediately above the shoulder, rises a thick fleshy hump

like that of the zebu, but not so large, and from this commences the *dorsal ridge*, which forms the most striking feature in the appearance of this animal, and is a peculiarity which I have not remarked in any other. This ridge, which is about two inches in thickness, and of a firm gristly texture, rises from the back like the keel of a boat reversed; it is from six to seven inches high at its junction with the hump, and gradually diminishes to three inches at the point where it terminates abruptly, a little beyond the centre of the back. The hind-quarters—as in the common bison—droop considerably; and, in the male animal particularly, appear disproportionately small and weak, when compared with his enormous forehand. The tail is short, the tuft of hair at the end not reaching below the hocks. Young animals are covered with a short thick coat of *woolly* hair, which becomes more scanty with age; and in very old animals the back and sides are almost naked, showing a dark shining skin like that of the buffalo. The general colour of the animal is a dark coffee brown, at some seasons almost black, at others inclining to rufous; belly and inside of the thighs ochrey yellow; forehead and legs below the knee dirty white, or rather a light cream colour.

The female differs from the male in having the hump on the shoulder very small, indeed hardly perceptible; horns less robust; longer and more finely formed head; slender neck, without any folds in the skin; hardly any dewlap; and in the dorsal ridge extending less far back, not beyond the centre of the back. Neither male nor female have any vestige of a mane. The skull is two inches thick on the forehead, and in an old male is so hard and compact, as frequently to resist a bullet. I have more than once fired at a bull's head within twenty yards, with a bullet weighing more than an ounce, and

hit him between the eyes, without producing any other effect than that of stunning him for a few seconds; and on one occasion, in skinning the head of a bull which I had dropped, in the act of charging, by a ball in the forehead, and afterwards despatched by another shot in the nape of the neck, I found the bullet, although it had only struck the thin part of the skull which protects the orbit of the eye, flattened out under the skin like a crown-piece; the bone, which in this part is not more than half an inch thick, had resisted the further progress of the bullet as effectually as though it had been iron; and although cracked and splintered, over a circular space of three inches in diameter, was sufficiently compact to hold together till all the integuments were removed; when it came away in small pieces, leaving the orbit of the eye uncovered. It may be supposed that this was owing to my having used too small a charge of powder; but such was not the case, for with the same charge I had previously sent a bullet through the thickest part of the animal's body, breaking the shoulder-blade and one of the ribs in its passage.

The bison of India carries his head low, like the common bison, and altogether presents very much the appearance which I fancy that animal would have if divested of its shaggy mane. A friend of mine, who examined the skeleton of the animal after it had been picked clean by the vultures, could only discover thirteen pairs of ribs, as in the common ox, whereas the bison is furnished with fourteen pairs. I think, however, notwithstanding the absence of the fourteenth pair of ribs, that the great breadth of the forehead, the shape of the horns, the elevated shoulder, the drooping hind-quarter, the shortness of the tail, the extreme thickness of the hide, and the woolly texture of the hair, afford sufficient reasons for

referring this animal to the bisontine group; and that it is identical with the animal described by Cuvier as the *bos gaurus*, there can be no doubt.

The favourite haunt of the bison appears to be a mountainous country clothed with forest; and accordingly they are found in considerable numbers in the heavy forest jungle along the whole line of the Western Ghauts. They generally go in herds of ten or fifteen; and are found in the morning and evening in the small open glades of the forest, where they repair to feed on the young grass and tender shoots of the bamboo which spring up in these spots after the monsoon. They retire during the heat of the day to the thickest recesses of the forest, where it is difficult to find them, and almost impossible to approach them. The native hunters say the female bears nine months, and drops her calf in November; for which purpose she retires to the more open jungles on the outskirts of the forest. In the month of May the old bulls are generally found solitary. The natives informed us that they had once or twice succeeded in taking a young calf, but such was the incorrigible wildness of the little animal that they could not succeed in rearing it: it refused milk and every other kind of food, and struggled incessantly to escape, till it beat itself to death.*

The bison is naturally a fierce animal, and particularly so when wounded; if not brought down or disabled by the first shot he generally charges, and I have known instances of their being the first to commence hostilities. I have been told they invariably do so if they perceive the hunter; but I confess I never had sufficient curiosity to try the experiment. I always approached them up the wind, with as much caution as if I

* Several instances have occurred in which bison calves have been reared, and lived for two or three years; but they do not thrive in domesticity.—W. E.

had been stalking deer, and took care to conceal myself effectually before I fired. The herd, startled by the report of the rifle, and unable to discover any enemy—for, as I said before, I took care never to give them the wind of me—were seized with a panic and fled; and although the wounded animal sometimes attempted to charge, he was in general so far disabled as not to prove very dangerous.

In a previous chapter, on bison-shooting, I mentioned an instance of my having been charged by the old bull of a herd, who returned on hearing the wounded cow bellow. On another occasion my brother was charged by a solitary bull without any previous provocation; he was going quietly through the forest looking for deer, when he heard a crashing noise behind him, and, on looking back, discovered an old bull making at him with his head down and his tail on end; there being no tree at hand behind which he could shelter himself, my brother, fortunately, had presence of mind to stand his ground, and, waiting till the bull was close to him, fired in his face. The bull dropped on his knees apparently stunned, but immediately recovered himself, and as if satisfied that the strange intruder on his dominions was a fellow not to be trifled with, he walked off into cover with the blood trickling over his nose, and was never more seen.

Native hunters in general have a great dread of the bison, and give exaggerated accounts of its ferocity. There are few, except the 'Seedees,' who venture to attack them; and even they greatly prefer taking a pot-shot from a tree to following them on foot. Some native huntsmen even refuse to act as guides in the parts of the forest which they frequent. I recollect once being out deer-stalking with a fellow of this description, when we came unexpectedly on a herd of bison; being in thick cover they made off before I could raise my

rifle, but even the transient glimpse we had of them so terrified my guide that he nearly dropped, and neither threats nor bribes could induce him to advance another step into the forest. On my asking him to describe the animal which had occasioned such alarm, he whispered (for he was afraid to speak above his breath) that it was the Jungle Koolgah ; and, holding his hands high above his head, assured me that it was as large as an elephant, with horns as long as his arms, and more ferocious than a tiger.

Bison seldom leave the shelter of the forest ; but instances have been known of solitary bulls straying into the open country, under which circumstances they become exceedingly fierce and dangerous. An instance of this occurred during my residence in India. A large bull was discovered in an open plain several miles from any jungle, and information having been sent to the nearest military station, a party of young officers turned out against him. The original plan was to approach him quietly and shoot him ; but on arriving at the ground it was found so beautifully adapted for cavalry movements, that some of the young gentlemen, who were keen hog-hunters, proposed to give the noble brute something like fair play, by attacking him on horseback with their favourite weapon, the spear. This measure—more chivalrous than prudent—was carried by a large majority ; and after a desperate engagement which lasted several hours, the unfortunate bull was done to death ; but not before one horse had been killed, and his rider severely injured. The horse being young and violent, did not wheel off quickly enough when the spear was delivered, and the bull catching him under the flank with his horns, tossed him over his head as if he had been no heavier than a dog. The horse had his spine and thigh-bone fractured, and the rider was with difficulty saved from the enraged

animal, by his companions coming to the rescue, and diverting his attack to themselves.

In forest shooting, the sportsman should always be provided with two guns, a rifle—which, if he does not object to the weight, had better be double-barrelled—to be carried by himself, and a smooth-bored double-barrel to be carried by his attendant, as a reserve. I recommend the spare gun to be smooth-bored, as being more easily charged in a hurry than a grooved barrel ; and, although not so efficient at long ranges as a rifle, it is sufficiently accurate for short distances and running shots. Both guns ought to carry a large-sized ball—not less, I should say, than twelve to the pound—and if they are both of the same calibre so much the better, as many annoying mistakes in loading are thus avoided. It is also a good plan, instead of carrying patches, to have the bullets sewed up in pieces of greased leather ; much time is thus saved in loading, and every Indian sportsman knows how valuable moments sometimes are both in bison and tiger shooting. Some men have a fancy for using plugs or cylinders of lead instead of bullets,* but I never approved of them ; they cannot be depended upon at any distance, and the only advantage they possess is that of containing a greater weight of metal, which, with a gun carrying a bullet of twelve to the pound, I consider superfluous. Others I have seen who cut their bullets into four quarters, previous to sewing them up in leather ; but this is a palpable piece of absurdity, to which the doctor's plan of using 'grit shot' and a wide-mouthed fusee is vastly superior.

The ammunition should be carried in a leather pouch, buckled round the waist, and hanging towards the right side, so as to come readily to the hand ; it should be divided

* This I believe to be the original idea of the modern conical ball.

into three compartments—one for the powder-flask, another for bullets, and the third—a small one—for caps; the best and handsomest material for a pouch of this description, is a dressed leopard-skin 'of your own killing.'

A hunting-knife thrust into the belt—the mode of carrying it which from experience I found most convenient—is also a necessary appendage: this must not be a little pocket-knife, like the 'skean-dhu,' used by Highland sportsmen, but a good serviceable weapon with a blade at least eighteen inches long, as sharp as a razor, and heavy enough to hew a passage through tangled thickets of underwood—to quarter the larger species of deer—or to cut a stout pole on which to carry home the smaller ones. A knife of this kind sometimes proves a valuable weapon in the event of coming to close quarters with a bear; and I have frequently found it of service in finishing a wounded stag that objected to being put out of pain in the usual manner.

I have known men who carried pistols in their belt, in addition to the knife; but they are very inconvenient weapons, and seldom come into play. The only occasion on which I ever knew a pistol prove of service was in a tiger-hunt, when my brother—who had dismounted from the elephant, to shoot a wounded tiger that refused to break cover—dropped him, in the act of charging, with a pistol-bullet, after both barrels of his rifle had been discharged.

A flint and steel for striking a light, and a pocket compass, are articles which no sportsman should ever be without; and a telescope, although not so indispensably necessary in forest shooting as on the plains or open hills, is always worth the trouble of carrying.

Never, for the sake of saving yourself a little additional weight, allow your attendant to carry the ammunition-pouch.

This arrangement is not only inconvenient for loading, but in the event of your being separated by accident, and losing each other in the jungle, you are left unarmed. Neither let your stock of ammunition be too scanty; there is no saying how many shots you may require; and of all the miseries of sporting life, that of finding your ammunition-pouch empty in the hour of need is the worst.

The best dress for forest sporting is a close round jacket of strong fustian, cord breeches, and leather leggings, all as nearly as possible of the colour of dry bamboo or withered herbage. This is of the utmost importance; a dress of any conspicuous colour is not only inappropriate for stalking; but may prove fatal to the wearer, by attracting the attention of the bison and inducing them to charge. A British officer in the Bombay Presidency met with his death, a few years ago, from having imprudently gone out bison-shooting in a white jacket. The bull of the herd charged him; and although he did his best to escape by dodging among the trees, he presented too conspicuous an object to elude the vigilance of the enraged animal, which eventually hunted him down, and crushed him to death against a tree.

A common shooting-jacket is not only inconveniently heavy for jungle work, but the skirts and pockets—unnecessary appendages where the ammunition-pouch is used—are troublesome in getting through thick cover, and occasion a rustling, which frequently mars the success of the best-conducted stalk. The head-piece may be of any description provided it is a good colour, and protects the head from the sun. I generally used to wear a sort of thing in the form of a hunting-cap, made of strong tanned leather, with a peak to protect the eyes. This, although somewhat uncouth in form, and hard in texture, possessed the advantage of fitting close

to the head, and did yeoman's service, in forcing a passage—ram fashion—through tangled masses of thorny brushwood.

No man need attempt to shoot bison or stalk deer in the forest, who is not in good working condition, and capable of enduring both heat and thirst; for in your tropical forests there is no water to be found except a few stagnant pools, filled with a decoction of decayed vegetable matter, and trodden into mud by the feet of wild animals; and to drink anything stronger than water, while exposed to the heat of a tropical sun, is little short of suicide. The training, I acknowledge, is disagreeable; and the patient must expect, for the first few days, to return from work with his tongue lolling out of his mouth, his eyes burning in their sockets, and feeling, on the whole, a good deal like a rabid dog that has been hunted through a couple of counties; only that 'hydrophobia' will not be one of his symptoms. But if he survive the first week, he will soon get hardened to it; and consider the glorious draught of pale ale which awaits him on his return to camp, an ample recompense for all the sufferings of the day. *N.B.*—Always include in your baggage a pewter pot, containing at least a quart. Nothing short of this will suffice to quench the thirst generated by a day's bison-shooting. 'This has been proved,' as the old receipt-books have it.

The description of bison-shooting given in a previous chapter sufficiently explains the method of stalking and driving this animal.

We come now to the deer tribe, the first of which in point of size, though not the best in quality, is the 'Sambar.'

The great Rusa-deer or Sambar (*Cervus Aristotelis* of Cuvier) is a noble animal nearly as large as the elk, and is generally so called by European sportsmen; but, except in

point of size, he bears no resemblance whatever to that animal. He has all the grace and lofty bearing of the European stag, and possesses one advantage over him, that of being better shaped behind. The hind-quarters of the sambar are like those of a thoroughbred horse; whereas the red-deer is low behind, and more or less cat-hammed like a donkey. The horns are as large, in proportion to the size of the animal, as those of the European stag; but more robust, and are nearly of the same form; differing only in this respect that, although they are regularly shed and renewed, and annually increase in size, they never acquire more than two antlers—the brow antler and another near the top of the beam.

A moderate-sized head, now in my possession, measures as follows:—

	Feet.	Inches.
Length of skull, the flesh being removed	1	$5\frac{1}{2}$
Breadth between the eyes . .	0	6
Circumference of the burr . .	0	11
Circumference of horn above the brow antler	0	$7\frac{1}{2}$
Length from tip to burr along the curve	2	9
Span from tip to tip . . .	2	7

I have, however, seen heads which greatly exceeded the above dimensions. The largest I ever met with was a gigantic specimen, preserved at Mysore, and said to have been killed by the Hon. Mr. Cole, which, to the best of my recollection, measured eighteen inches round the burr, and was large in proportion, the beam being nearly as thick as a man's arm. But a head of this kind is not to be met with every day.

The head of the Rusa-deer is beautifully formed, the line of the face straight, and the muzzle fine; the suborbital sinus —which is very large—expands greatly when the animal is excited. The ears are much larger and broader than those of the European stag. The neck, throat, and shoulders, are

covered with long coarse hair, which is capable of being erected like the mane of a lion, and gives the animal a formidable appearance when standing at bay or otherwise excited. The general colour is dark brown in summer, and deep slate colour, approaching to black, in winter. The face is of a darker shade than the general colour. Inside of the legs and thighs, fawn colour, belly whitish, breast black. The hinds are a shade lighter in colour, and have a longer and less finely formed head than the stags. Both male and female have canine teeth in the upper jaw.*

Unfortunately, I do not possess any memorandum of the size and weight of this animal; and can therefore only state, in a general way, that a full-grown stag measures from fourteen to fifteen hands (or 5 feet 4 inches) at the shoulder, and weighs as much as a moderate-sized ox. They are said to grow to the height of sixteen hands, and this I can believe to be the case from the immense size of some heads I have seen, although I never had the good fortune to meet with so fine a specimen myself. They are found amongst heavy jungle in all parts of India; and are particularly numerous on the Neilgherry hills, and along the Western Ghauts. At the time I visited the Neilgherry hills, deer were so numerous that they used to come into the gardens at night; and, in beating for deer, with a party of ten guns, I have shot as many as three, besides a wild-boar, to my own share, within a few miles of the cantonment.

The Rusa-deer, or Sambar, is very impatient of heat; and conceals himself during the day in the deepest recesses of the forest. Like all animals of the deer tribe, it has a great predilection for salt; and at the season when the natives set fire to the long grass, those animals resort in great numbers to

* In the Red-deer the canine teeth are only found in the male.

the burnt ground, apparently for the purpose of licking up the ashes. So eager are they to obtain this luxury, that I have seen a herd of them gambolling about on the burnt space, while the ground was still hot and smoking, as if waiting impatiently till the ashes were sufficiently cool to suit their palate.

The stag is a very powerful and courageous animal, and stands resolutely at bay when wounded. The natives declare that he frequently attacks the bison. I once shot a bull-bison with several deep wounds in his neck, only partially healed; it was evident that these could not have been received in combat with one of his own species; the horns of the bison being not only too blunt to penetrate so thick a hide, but so placed that the points cannot be used, except by young animals, whose horns have not yet acquired the proper curve. I therefore concluded that the wounds must have been inflicted by the claws of a tiger; but old Kamah, who was my guide on the occasion, laughed at the idea—saying that the tiger never ventured to attack a male bison—and that the wounds had been inflicted by the antlers of a stag. He assured me that during the rutting season, the male sambar—not satisfied with the pleasures of his own seraglio—sometimes attempts to seduce the female bison from the paths of virtue; and that on such occasions deadly encounters take place between the cervine Lothario and the injured bull. Kamah had more than once witnessed one of these duels; and declared that the indomitable courage and formidable weapons of the stag frequently prevailed against the enormous strength of his colossal antagonist. On making further inquiries, I found this statement confirmed by the evidence of several other natives. That such encounters take place I can perfectly believe. A tame ram has been known to attack a bull with success, and why not a

stag? But I confess I am rather sceptical as to the alleged cause of feud; although I know old Kamah to have been a close observer of nature, and one whose evidence in such matters might generally be relied on.

During the rutting season the stag bellows like the male of the red-deer; and when roused in cover, both male and female utter a shrill note of alarm, not unlike the sound of a mail-coach horn.

In the English edition of Cuvier's 'Animal Kingdom' I find the following passage, illustrative of the courageous nature of the sambar:—

"They (British sportsmen) represent him as excessively strong and vicious. Some of them, on a shooting expedition, had crossed an arm of the Jumna to a woody island in quest of game. They were on the back of an elephant, and, entering the jungle suddenly, roused an old male of this species. On seeing the elephant he started up with a loud shrill pipe or whistle, which caused others to rise and dart into cover, while he stood at bay with his bristly mane on end, in a most threatening attitude; but before the sportsmen could prepare proper shot, he wheeled round and dashed through the underwood with the facility of a rhinoceros. Captain Williamson evidently met the same species. He describes the stag as arriving at the size of a Lincolnshire cart-horse, fifteen or sixteen hands high, shining black, with tanned points (of the hair?). One of these, he says, heads a score of females, who are of a mouse colour. He too calls it an elk, and adds that they reside in the Prauss jungles." *

When in India I had two specimens—male and female—of this animal in a domestic state, and kept them till the horns of the male began to sprout; when being about to start on a

* Cuvier's Animal Kingdom, vol. iv. p. 111.

march of eight hundred miles, and having no means of transporting the animals, I gave them to a friend. At the time I parted with them the male was as large as a full-grown hart, and very gentle. He used to walk about the house like a dog; and at night was confined within a bamboo enclosure, from which he constantly broke out, and occasioned dreadful havoc in the neighbouring gardens; he was also very destructive to books and papers, which he devoured whenever an opportunity offered.

In hunting this animal in the jungle the same method is pursued as in bison-shooting. On the Neilgherry hills they are either stalked in the same manner as the red-deer in Scotland; or, when found in cover, are driven out with hounds, and shot in passes.

The flesh of the sambar is coarse and seldom fat; but the head makes excellent soup, and the marrow-bones are considered a great delicacy.

The spotted-deer (*cervus axis*) is more generally distributed over the country than the sambar. It not only abounds in the forest jungle, but may generally be found in the western provinces, wherever an extent of low brushwood affords it sufficient shelter. It is not found on the Neilgherry hills. This animal is about the size of the fallow-deer, and so closely resembles it in appearance that it is difficult to distinguish the females of the different species. The male however is easily distinguished from the fallow buck by the form of his horns, which instead of being palmated are rounded like those of the stag; they stand nearly upright with the points projecting forward; and have only two antlers, one at the base pointing forwards, and another halfway up the beam, on the internal side, turned to the rear. The face of the spotted-deer is also darker than that of the

fallow-deer, with a black line running down the centre; and the buttocks, white in the fallow-deer, are fulvous in the 'axis.' A four-year-old buck was found to weigh 178 lbs. The variety of the spotted-deer, known in Bengal as the hog-deer, is not found in the Madras or Bombay Presidencies.

Spotted-deer go in herds of fifteen or twenty, three or four of which are generally bucks; they pass the greater part of the day in sleep, but in the morning and evening may be found in great numbers in the open glades of the forest, or among long grass on the banks of rivers. They are extremely shy, and when once disturbed it is difficult to get a second shot at them. The venison is superior to that of any other deer found in India, and, when in good condition, is quite equal to that of the best park-deer.

The style of sport afforded by this species of deer varies according to the nature of the country in which they are found. In open forests like those of Canara, where the high timber presents no obstacle to stealing softly towards your game, and where the huge stems of the teak-tree afford a screen to cover your approach, deer-stalking may be pursued in all its fascinating perfection. But few of the jungles near Dharwar, certainly not the bamboo-covered hills which the deer mostly frequent, admit of any other mode than beating up the animals.

In ground of this kind the game is discovered with the aid of a telescope. I know no sight more beautiful than a herd of spotted-deer grouped together on one of the conical hills of the bamboo jungle. At sunrise, before they have been disturbed, or driven by the heat to the dark shady covers where they sleep during the day, you may sit upon an adjoining height and watch these beautiful creatures by the hour. But to attempt to approach them through the thick

jungle, where the ground is strewed with dried leaves and twigs that crackle at every step, is labour in vain. The old buck would snort at the first rustle, and throwing back his spreading antlers till the tips hung over his dappled haunches, would dash away at the head of his herd to the thickets of some distant ravine. Watching at some frequented pass while the beaters drive the game from an opposite direction, is the only plan I have ever found successful with a herd thus situated.

The following extract from my journal affords a sample of this style of sport :—

"When I reached the ground, just as the sun rising over the distant hills rendered objects visible, a herd of deer were discovered feeding on a bare peak about a mile distant. Their position rendering it impossible to approach them unobserved, we sat down and watched them for some time ; till the shrill cry of a doe, wandering with her fawn in the jungle below, induced them to join her. The deer had not yet discovered us, and a run was made to intercept them before they reached a favourite ravine towards which they were making. By the time we reached a narrow space of open ground commanding the open pass, none of the deer were visible ; but a panting pariah-dog, returning from the ravine, and the marks of deeply-indented hoofs, sufficiently explained the reason. We therefore returned to one of the look-out men, posted on a rising ground that overlooked the whole jungle, to ascertain if the deer had passed. He telegraphed their line towards a deep wooded valley, where we felt certain they would lay up, and here I arranged a good beat. The deer, after one attempt to break back, passed within seventy yards of my post. I selected the largest buck, and fired with a steady aim, which I felt confident,

from the sound of the ball, must have hit; although he went on without staggering. I kept my eye upon the herd as they dashed over the crest of the next hill, and saw that the buck was missing. We accordingly got upon his trail, marked with blood, that from single drops became splashes of frothy crimson—certain symptoms of a mortal wound—and followed it to a small ravine, where we found the buck lying on his back quite dead. The ball had hit him behind the shoulder and passed out at the chest."

In some jungles where there are neither ravines nor frequented runs, driving does not succeed. Stalking in its strict sense is impossible, for the deer cannot be seen till within pistol-shot, and even then the chances are that the crash of the herd as they break away is the only intimation you have of their proximity. The only way, therefore, is to follow the native system.

When you find a fresh track, follow it up as long as the trail is plain enough to satisfy you of its being that morning's print. The warmth of the droppings will enable you to judge whether the deer is far ahead or not; and if the trail is crossed by another equally fresh track, the size of the print, and the direction to which it points, will generally keep you to the original trail, although frequent crossings make it very troublesome. About eight o'clock, when the sun becomes powerful, spotted-deer retire to secluded shady spots, which are easily recognised from the number of footmarks that surround them. In one of these you will probably find the deer you have been following, provided he has not got the wind of you, or heard your footstep on his trail. In either case he is off at once, and will probably go a great distance before he lays up again. And even when all goes well, and you are certain that your quarry is lying within ten yards of you, the chances

are that after all your trouble you only get a snap-shot as he glances like a meteor through the thick underwood. This appears tantalizing work, and there are few who have patience to persevere in it. But to me there is something very interesting in thus following up a trail for hours together, and finding your game at last, even when your labour is not rewarded by a shot.

In this style of shooting the sportsman is apt to stumble on a tiger, these animals always frequenting the covers where deer most abound; and it is therefore doubly necessary to walk circumspectly, not only to avoid disturbing your game, but to guard against danger. Here are two examples to prove this rule:

I was following up a fresh trail, when I heard a slight switching in a ravine to my left, which I fancied must be occasioned by deer or wild hog. I crept softly to the place with both barrels cocked. At first I could see nothing; but presently, under cover of a shelving rock, overhung by brushwood, I caught sight of the malignant green eye of a tiger, crouching as if about to spring, and could now account for the switching sound I had heard: it was the nervous motion of the tail which generally precedes the fatal spring of either a tiger or a cat, and which the fortunate circumstance of my catching the brute's eye, and halting suddenly, had prevented. Availing myself of the advantage I had obtained by catching the tiger's eye, I continued to gaze at him steadily, while I retreated backwards step by step till I got round an angle of rock which concealed me from sight, when I started down the ravine as fast as the nature of the ground would permit, till I came to a good-sized tree overhanging the gorge. Into the branches of this I climbed, and whistled the recall for Ellis and the guide. Having explained

to them what had occurred, and pointed out the exact position in which the tiger lay, I desired them to get above him, and, by pelting stones and firing shots, drive him down the ravine towards me. This had the desired effect; the tiger started immediately, and unsupicious of any danger in front, came stealthily down the ravine, crouching low to conceal himself, and casting suspicious glances over his shoulder. As he passed under the tree on which I was perched, I took a pot-shot, within ten yards, and sent a ball between his shoulder-blades, which must have passed through his heart, for making a convulsive bound, he dashed his head against the branch on which I was seated, sprinkling me with the blood which gushed from his mouth, and fell dead in the bottom of the ravine. The report of my rifle was answered by a hearty cheer from Ellis, and a yell of triumph from the guide, who, scrambling down the ravine, proceeded at once to light his match and perform the important ceremony of singeing off the tiger's whiskers, while Ellis and I lighted our pipes, and seated ourselves under the shade of a tree to admire the noble proportions of our fallen enemy. He was a remarkably fine male tiger, one of the largest I have seen, and the skin in beautiful condition.

On another occasion, I was making my way to a pass towards which the beaters were to drive a herd of spotted-deer, when two tigers crossed my path, and walked into the cover I was about to beat, without taking any notice of me. I immediately recalled the people, surrounded the place, and dispatched a messenger to Dharwar for a bundle of rockets, with a circular to all the sporting men of the station. By twelve o'clock a party of ten had assembled; and places which we had been erecting in a semicircle round the cover, were occupied by guns so as to command every outlet. The look-

out men were carefully posted, and the beat commenced with our hopes of success almost amounting to certainty. The tigers were afoot, going before the beaters as straight as we could wish to our passes, when a young hand, who unfortunately made one of the party, ruined all. The deer broke cover first, and unable to resist the temptation of a shot, or perhaps thinking, in his excitement, that they were tigers, he fired. This was death to our hopes. The tigers immediately turned, dashed through the line of beaters—fortunately without killing any—and made their way into a dense bamboo thicket, from whence twenty elephants could not have driven them. And there they remained, laughing at our beards, in spite of rockets and fireworks, till the approach of night obliged us to give in. Of a tiger, as of a fox, it may be said that 'to be well found is to be half killed,' and nothing could have been more favourable than this find. It was, therefore, not a little provoking, after all the trouble we had taken, to have our sport so effectually marred by the stupidity of one unlucky griffin.

The spotted-deer might easily be ridden down and speared if found in open ground; and that it may be done even in low jungle appears by the following extract from my brother's journal.

"My old set of beaters were at the cover before daybreak to mark the spotted-deer into the 'nullahs.' A large herd with four bucks was seen to enter the thicket above the tank a few minutes before I arrived, and I took my post on the tree from which I have had so many good shots on former occasions. The beat did not succeed; and seeing the deer break cover, and take a line of country where the jungle was almost open enough to ride to hog, the idea suddenly occurred to me, of attempting to ride one down. I believed it had never been

done before; but what of that? I had speared an antelope and a wolf; why not a spotted-deer, which is less swift than either? Challenger was standing saddled at the edge of the cover in readiness for hog, and the sight of him cocking his ears, as the deer went by, decided me. I slung my rifle to a branch, slipped off the tree, and leaving a message with my horsekeeper for the people to follow me in the direction of Whunhuttee, for which I knew the deer would make, gave chase in the direction they had taken. The dappled herd was soon in sight going slowly through low brushwood in the direction I wished; and selecting a fine buck with a full head, I laid into him. He played all sorts of tricks with me at first; but finding me in earnest, he threw back his branching antlers, and, setting his head straight, went away at his best pace. After the first burst, I found that over every cleared patch, where the tangled shoots did not prevent my horse from laying out, I could go fast enough to press him; but, in passing through thickets, I was obliged to do my best to keep him in sight. We had gone about five miles when the buck shewed the first symptoms of distress by running short, and here I began to push him whenever it was practicable. For another mile his tongue was hanging from his mouth, his tail shaking, and he kept looking anxiously behind as I gained on him. It appeared now to be a certain thing, if I could only spear him before he reached a strong ravine not more than a hundred yards ahead. In with the spurs! The horse gained at every stride. The deer staggered forward reeling with weakness. The spear was quivering over his haunches. Another stride would have done it, when he reached the goal, and throwing himself headlong into the wooded glen was safe from further pursuit.

"I was savage at the moment; although, when my blood

cooled a little, I did not grudge the gallant brute his life. I sat on the edge of the ravine for an hour, in hopes of my people coming up, when we might have taken the deer alive without difficulty. But, no one appearing, I was obliged to walk home, my horse dead lame from thorns, with one reflection only to console me, that I had proved the possibility of riding down a deer, even in jungle."

The Muntjak, or rib-faced deer (*cervus muntjak*)—jungle-buckarie of the natives—is the third variety of deer found in the western provinces of India. It is a rare animal, of which I have only seen two or three specimens, and only killed one. I therefore know little of its habits. It is about the size of the roebuck, with short close hair of a reddish brown colour. The form of the head and horns is peculiar, and distinguishes it from every other animal of the deer tribe. Two rib-like eminences ascend from above the nose over the eyes, and elevating themselves from the head in the form of slender pedestals, terminate in a flattened summit. On these the horns are placed, about five inches long, curved at the top in the form of a hook, with a small branch at the base, pointing forward. Between the ribs on the forehead the skin of the face is doubled into a fold which has the appearance of a third or central rib. The canines in the upper jaw are prolonged into the form of tusks, sharp at the posterior edge, and hanging from the mouth with the points turned outwards and backwards. They are generally found singly or in pairs, never in herds. The habits of these animals are but imperfectly known to naturalists.*

* The muntjak is much more common in the forests below the Ghauts. The agricultural products there consist of cocoa-nuts, betel-nut, black pepper, cinnamon, and cardamoms, in addition to rice, the staple grain. The Ryots live apart in their gardens, scattered through the forest, not in villages, as in

Besides the above-mentioned species of deer, there is found, in the depths of the western forest, that rare little animal, the Indian Musk (*moschus memina*). They are formed like a little deer, without horns, and conceal themselves like a hare, among dead leaves, from whence, when disturbed, they dart out with wonderful swiftness. They are about eighteen inches in length, of a cinereous olive colour, beautifully marked with spots and horizontal bars of pure white. The body is robust, and the legs short, giving it somewhat of a pig-like appearance. The male is furnished with tusks similar to those of the muntjak.

I have heard European sportsmen talk of a species of deer larger than the 'axis,' of a uniform red colour, said to inhabit low jungles. But as my informants were no great naturalists, and as I could never either meet with a specimen, or obtain a satisfactory description of the animal, I conclude that they had mistaken the female of the neilghau—which differs so

the upper country. Besides their regular gardens, they reserve portions of forest, which the axe is never allowed to touch, and which become tangled thickets, where the black-pepper vine, the cardamom, and the cinnamon, delight to flourish. These spots, called *Káns* in Canara, are the favourite haunts of the muntjak, whence their Canarese name of *Kán-Koori* or Kán-Sheep. The muntjak is generally found solitary, occasionally in pairs. The males fight fiercely in the rutting season, and inflict severe wounds with their long tushes; and I have seen a wounded buck defend himself stoutly with the same weapons, rendering caution necessary in securing him. From the thickness of the cover in which they dwell, their ordinary mode of progression is by a succession of springs or bounds, with the head stretched forward and the horns lying well back on the neck, to avoid the superincumbent branches. The flesh of the muntjak yields the finest and most delicate venison found in India.

A tame specimen used to lick its face all over with its tongue, which was remarkably long and extensile, so that it could pass it over its eyes, cheeks, and the whole of its face. Its cry was a short, small bleat, sharper than that of a lamb or kid.—W. E.

much in colour from the male as to appear of a different species—for a rare variety of deer.

The following description, by my friend Elliot, of the killing of his first bison, which occurred shortly before our meeting at Dharwar, will form a suitable conclusion to this chapter :—

"Crossing the river in a canoe, we struck into the forest, and soon came upon a track, which Kamah pronounced to be that of an old bull. On this he proceeded with the steadiness and sagacity of a bloodhound, though it was often imperceptible to our eyes ; at times, when a doubt caused us to stop, he made a cast ; and on recovering the trail, summoned us to proceed by a low whistle, or by imitating the cry of the spotted-deer, for not a word was spoken, and the most perfect silence was enjoined. We followed his steps three miles to the river, then along the bank towards Dandilly, where the animal appeared to have crossed to the opposite side. Wading across, and holding our guns and ammunition over our heads, we ascended the bank of a small island, covered with thick underwood, and some large trees, among which the bull had laid down, about fifteen yards from where we stood. The jungle was so thick that we found it difficult to distinguish more than a great black mass among the underwood.

"On firing, the animal got on his legs, received two more balls, and rushed into the jungle, where he became very furious, and we were obliged to shelter ourselves behind trees, to avoid the repeated charges he made, though one ball through the shoulder, which had broken the bone above the elbow, prevented his moving with facility. He then became exhausted, and lay down, snorting loudly, and rising to charge when any one approached. A ball in the forehead caused him to roll over the precipitous bank into the river. Still,

however, he was not dead ; and several balls were fired into his forehead, behind the ear, and at the junction of the head and neck, before life became extinct. One ball, which had struck the vertebræ of the neck, was taken out almost pulverized.

"When drawn ashore and examined more minutely, the first sentiment produced in all present was astonishment at his immense bulk ; his breadth and weight seemed so great that he looked like a young elephant."

CHAPTER XIV.

FROM DHARWAR TO THE CAMP.

Dharwar, May 24th.—VERILY the affairs of this life are full of uncertainty.

I had made arrangements for accompanying my brother and Elliot, during their annual official tour through a part of the district abounding with large game of all kinds.* We were to have started three days hence. Information had just reached us of two notorious man-eating tigers haunting villages on our proposed line of march. And we were yesterday evening assembled round Elliot's hospitable board, discussing the good news with all the eagerness of youthful sportsmen, and drinking success to our expedition in a magnum of our host's best claret, when my bright visions of 'shikar' were put to flight, by having a long-backed official dispatch thrust under my nose. An official letter is at all times an unpleasing sight to a military man on leave; and in the present instance, I considered the appearance of one as peculiarly ill-timed. On opening the letter, my ill-will at the official document was considerably diminished by finding that it contained an order to join my company (the light company), which, with the grenadiers and a brigade of twelve-pounders, have been ordered up to reinforce Colonel Evans's division, now in the field against the insurgents in the Mysore country;

* During this excursion my brother and Elliot, in the course of three weeks, bagged thirteen royal tigers, besides panthers, bears, wild hog, and deer! For an account of two of these tigers see note, page 133.

but I confess it would have been infinitely more welcome had it arrived a fortnight later.

My commanding officer, in a private note, is good enough to say I need not join, unless I wish it, before the expiration of my leave. But, much as I admire tiger-hunting, I have been long enough in harness to know that lieutenants in general and lieutenants of flank companies in particular—it being presumed that they possess an inordinate appetite for fire-eating—are expected to prefer man-hunting to all other field-sports. And, although the game at which we are now to be slipped are 'curs of low degree,' in taking whose scalps little glory can be gained, I consider it my duty, as a subaltern of a fire-eating company, to declare in favour of the latter amusement—I have accordingly announced to the colonel my intention of appearing in my 'war-paint' at the place of rendezvous (the village of Shemoga, 150 miles from hence) on the day appointed—I have already dispatched my servants and baggage, whom I shall overtake by starting on horseback to-morrow ; and having done so, begin to feel, as Brother Jonathan terms it, 'very wolfish about the head and ears'—bloodthirsty exceedingly.

The only horse I brought with me from Bangalore being old and rather shaky on his fore legs, my brother, not liking the idea of my marching through an enemy's country so ill mounted, has generously made me a present of a favourite Arab colt, named 'Turquoise ;' he is not yet four years old, but is a very promising animal, of the purest blood, remarkably fast, and quite master of my weight. In return, I have made over to my brother my venerable steed, 'Captain Head,' so named on account of the numerous beautiful impressions of his own and his rider's skull, which he has left on the soil in this neighbourhood. The 'Captain' has been a splendid horse

in his day, and is still 'a good one to go;' but the man who would ride him across country, with any feeling of security, must needs have limbs of caoutchouc, and a skull of iron. I may here mention, that after a month's trial, my brother found it impossible to stand the wear and tear of hunting-caps and collar-bones occasioned by the 'Captain's' inveterate habit of 'taking casts,' and accordingly presented him to a neighbouring 'jagheerdar,' who kept a breeding-stud, and was glad to get a horse of the 'Captain's' blood and figure into his establishment.

Dharwar, May 25th.—It was with a heavy heart that I this day bade adieu to Dharwar and my agreeable companions. We all had lunch together, after which I mounted my new nag, quaffed the stirrup-cup, and with many a 'God speed you,' proceeded on my way, accompanied by a 'sowar,' or native trooper, whom the collector of the district has been good enough to allow me as a guide and escort as far as Hurryhur.

Rode thirty miles to the village of Inglegy, where I overtook my servants and baggage. Much pleased with my little horse—he did the thirty miles at a hand-gallop in a little more than three hours, and came in fresh and playful as a kid. Halted for the night at the traveller's bungalow. These public bungalows, which of late years have been erected by Government at almost every stage along the principal roads, prove a great convenience to travellers by doing away with the necessity for carrying tents. They generally consist of two large rooms, with a bath-room attached to each, and have a 'compound,' or enclosed space at the back, containing stables, cook-houses, and other offices. Pensioned sepoys are appointed to take charge of these buildings; and the 'cotwall,' or head-policeman of the village, is bound to furnish supplies to

travellers, at prices regulated from time to time, by the collector's tariff, a copy of which is generally hung up in some conspicuous part of the bungalow. The only furniture they contain is a barrack-table, two chairs, and a rattan couch to each room. To a European eye, a large apartment with bare, whitewashed walls, thus scantily furnished, does not present a very inviting appearance; and in any other climate would appear cold and cheerless. But after a long march, exposed to the sickening glare of an Indian sun, shade and a refreshing bath are the luxuries chiefly coveted. The colder a room looks the better; and the appearance of a savoury dish of curry, flanked by a couple of wax-candles, and a bottle of cool claret, soon reconciles even a griffin, fresh from the comforts of an English hotel, to the naked walls, mud floors, and unglazed windows of an Indian bungalow.

May 26th.—To Savanoor, fourteen miles.—Reader, have you ever attempted—I say attempted, for no one can ever have succeeded in the attempt—to sleep on a bare rattan couch infested with bugs, the thermometer standing at about 100° of Fahrenheit, and the atmosphere perfectly alive with those stinging, buzzing, aggravating little fiends, disguised as insects, and calling themselves mosquitoes; or as my friend the Doctor describes them, "lang-nebbit things, sanguinivorous, gregarious, and garrulous?" If you have had this misfortune, you will no doubt retain a lively recollection of the fearful degree of mental and physical irritation occasioned by such a state of affairs, and believe that after passing last night in such company, I availed myself of the first peep of dawn to proceed this morning on my journey. My route lay through a flat uninteresting country, composed entirely of that black alluvial soil commonly called cotton-ground. Passed numerous herds of antelope, and got several good

shots ; but owing, I suppose, to the irritation of my nerves, I only succeeded in killing one, a fine black buck, which I 'tailored,' by hitting him in the haunch, although within a range of seventy yards. He, however, furnished an excellent dinner for myself and followers, including my attendant 'sowar,' who, with an eye to business, took the precaution of muttering a prayer over the animal, and cutting its throat the moment it fell, thereby rendering the flesh 'hulal,' or lawful to be eaten by himself and other true believers.

The sowars of India are irregular cavalry, levied and supported like the feudal vassals of the middle ages. Each 'jagheerdar,' or landholder, is bound to supply a certain number of soldiers to his liege lord ; and to arm, clothe, and feed them during the time their services are required. The 'jagheerdar' is, in general, ready enough to furnish his proportion of men—this costs him nothing—but feeding and clothing are very different matters ; and so little is the commissariat department attended to, that the men are taught to forage for themselves as a matter of course ; they are apt scholars, and seldom fail to get their own at least. In the field, indeed, sowars are little better than armed banditti ; they plunder friend and foe indiscriminately ; and, although well mounted and armed, and capable of being made efficient troops if properly organized, their irregular habits and insatiable thirst for plunder render them a serious nuisance in a friendly country, and a very inefficient force in that of an enemy.

A troop of sowars is generally placed under the orders of the collector of each district, for the purpose of carrying despatches, escort duty, etc. ; and to this class belongs my present guide. He is a Mussulman, young, and rather good-looking ; and, like all young Mussulmans with any pretensions to good looks, he is a finished dandy, and professed lady-killer.

His whole soul seems to be wrapped up in the decoration of his own proper person and his horse's trappings; and so entirely is he satisfied with himself, and all belonging to him, that nothing ever appears to disturb the equanimity of his temper. Sunshine and storm, good fare and bad, are all alike to the happy 'Mohadeen.' Whether sweltering under the heat of an Indian sun, or fighting his way against wind and rain, Mohadeen sits his horse, and handles his spear, with the same jaunty devil-may-care air, singing scraps of Persian love-songs, and ogling every pretty girl he passes with a patronizing air, and a twirl of his well-trimmed moustaches, that seems to imply he confers an honour on her by so doing; or when no such attractive object presents itself, he appears almost as much interested in the contemplation of his own legs and handsome accoutrements. His intercourse with Europeans appears to have divested him of some of his native prejudices; and instead of riding with bare legs and sandalled feet, he has learned to encase his nether limbs in white leather-breeches and jack-boots, armed with silver spurs; a piece of refinement which contrasts strangely enough with the Oriental character of his other garments. His turban, formed of the finest muslin, is at all times and in all weathers arranged with scrupulous neatness; and his glossy black beard is such as a rajah might envy. His 'alkhalak,' or upper garment, composed of scarlet cloth edged with gold lace, is bound round his loins with a Cashmere shawl; and into this is thrust a dagger and steel-hilted Mahratta sword richly inlaid with silver. His horse's trappings, too, of red and yellow velvet studded with cowrie shells, are 'got up regardless of expense,' and even his spear comes in for its due proportion of ornament. In short, my friend Mohadeen is the most dashing fellow of his class I have ever

seen; and when mounted on his showy high-actioned Cutch horse is a fine soldier-like fellow, well calculated to find favour in the eyes of the fair sex, by whom—if we may take his own word for it—he is looked upon as a perfect Roostum. How he became possessed of the various expensive articles of dress in which he glories, I have not presumed to ask; but any one acquainted with the predatory habits of the sowar may make a shrewd guess.

On arriving at the end of a march, Mohadeen, like a good soldier, devotes his first attention to his horse and accoutrements, on the good appearance of which he particularly prides himself. He then, with a military salaam, demands, 'Kya hookum, sahib?' (What orders, sir?) and having received his instructions, proceeds to the grand business of the day, the purification and adornment of his person. This is a very elaborate performance, occupying considerably more than an hour. Having divested himself of his riding-dress, he proceeds to the nearest tank—with no other covering than a rag tied round his loins—and carefully washes himself from head to foot, muttering his prayers as he does so. He then devotes at least half an hour to trimming, oiling, and arranging his cherished moustaches and flowing beard, occasionally calling in the aid of a native barber to shave his head and shampoo his limbs; and having satisfied himself that ample justice has been done to the lavish gifts of nature, proceeds to equip himself in an elegant undress, consisting of a fine white muslin robe, and wide trousers of flowered silk. His next care is to gird the cashmere shawl round his loins, tight enough to make his figure appear like that of a wasp; an embroidered skull-cap is stuck jauntily on one side of his head; his feet thrust into red morocco slippers; and sticking a lighted cheroot in the corner of his mouth, he shuffles off

with an air of inimitable self-complaisance to seek adventures, and make conquests among his fair country-women in the bazaar.

A good deal of thunder and lightning this evening—heralds of the approaching monsoon.

May 27th.—To Mootee Bennore, twenty-two miles, halting half way, at Devigherry, for breakfast. A good bungalow at both places. At Devigherry I found the verandah of the bungalow guarded by a stuffed tiger, which coming unexpectedly in sight on turning a corner, so terrified my horse that he reared up on end and nearly fell back upon me.

We encountered this morning one of the severest storms of wind and rain I have ever witnessed. The rain came upon us like water from a cataract, driven with blinding fury before a perfect hurricane of wind that bent the trees almost to the earth; our horses fairly turned tail, obstinately refusing to face it; and even Mohadeen appeared somewhat disconcerted, and uttered an involuntary 'bismillah,' as he watched the gradual rise of the water in his capacious boots, till they began to run over at the top like overfilled buckets. A few minutes sufficed to convert the dry water-courses into foaming torrents, and by the time the squall had passed, the whole country was flooded; the plain, which a few hours before was scorched and baked into deep fissures by a long-continued drought, now reflecting back the rays of the morning sun like a huge lake.

On the march from Devigherry to Mootee Bennore, I fell in with a small herd of antelope, and shot a black buck with twenty-inch horns, hitting him in the neck, while feeding, at a distance of 140 yards. The foot-prints of another buck, which I missed while passing me at his utmost speed, were so distinctly marked on the wet ground, that I had the curiosity

to measure several of his bounds, and found that they averaged twenty-five feet, an enormous stride for an animal not much larger than a roe. This, combined with great rapidity of stroke, fully accounts for the wonderful speed which the antelope is capable of exerting.

May 28th.—To Ranee Bennore, fourteen miles—cloudy morning—flat uninteresting country, partially cultivated—a good bungalow. I witnessed this morning a curious instance of wolfish generalship that interested me much; and which, in my humble opinion, goes far to prove that animals are endowed, to a certain extent, with reasoning faculties; and have means of communicating their ideas to each other.

I was, as usual, scanning the horizon with my telescope at daybreak, to see if any game was in sight. I had discovered a small herd of antelope feeding on a field from whence the crop had been lately removed, and was about to take the glass from my eye for the purpose of reconnoitring the ground; when, in a remote corner of the field, concealed from the antelope by a few intervening bushes, I faintly discerned in the gray twilight a pack of six wolves, seated on their hind quarters like dogs, and apparently in deep consultation. It appeared evident that, like myself, they wanted venison, and had some design upon the antelope; and, being curious to witness the mode of proceeding adopted by these four-legged poachers, I determined to watch their motions. I accordingly dismounted, leaving my horse in charge of the sowar; and creeping as near the scene of action as I could, without being discovered, concealed myself behind a bush. Having apparently decided on their plan of attack, the wolves separated; one remaining stationary, and the other five creeping cautiously round the edge of the field, like setters drawing on a shy covey of birds. In this manner they surrounded

the unsuspecting herd, one wolf lying down at each corner of the field, and the fifth creeping silently towards the centre of it, where he concealed himself in a deep furrow. The sixth wolf, which had not yet moved, now started from his hiding-place, and made a dash at the antelope. The graceful creatures, confident in matchless speed, tossed their heads, as if in disdain, and started off in a succession of flying bounds that soon left their pursuer far behind. But no sooner did they approach the edge of the field than one of the crouching wolves started up, turned them, and chased them in a contrary direction, while his panting accomplice lay down in his place to recover wind for a fresh burst. Again the bounding herd dashed across the plain, hoping to escape on the opposite side; but here they were once more headed by one of the crafty savages, who, in his turn, took up the chase, and coursed them till relieved by a fresh hand from an opposite quarter. In this manner the persecuted animals were driven from side to side, and from corner to corner, a fresh assailant heading them at every turn, till they appeared perfectly stupified with fear; and crowding together like frightened sheep, began to wheel round in diminishing circles. All this time the wolf which lay concealed in the furrow near the centre of the field, had never moved; although the antelope had passed and repassed within a few feet of him, and had, perhaps, even jumped over him; his time for action had not yet arrived. It now became evident that the unfortunate antelope must soon be tired out; when it appeared probable that the surrounding wolves would have made a combined attack, and driven the terrified herd towards the centre of the field, where the wolf who had hitherto been lying in reserve, would have sprung up in the midst of them, and secured at least one victim. I, however, did not allow matters to pro-

ceed so far. I was satisfied with what I had seen, and resolved to turn the tables on my friends the wolves, by making a slight change in the last act of the tragedy, which was now fast approaching. Accordingly, just as the antelope appeared to be driven to a stand-still, I put a stop to further proceedings on the part of their ravenous assailants, by sending a rifle bullet through the body of the nearest skulker, who incontinently gave up the ghost; and his sagacious companions, seeing that their game was up—now that 'the man with the gun' had taken a hand—made a precipitate retreat, leaving me undisputed master of the field. I might easily have brought down an antelope with my second barrel—for the poor things appeared stupified with fear—but after having so far espoused their cause, I felt it would be treachery on my part to avail myself of this advantage, and accordingly allowed them to depart in peace.

And now, let me ask the philosophic reader, was it mere instinct, or was it a certain power of combining ideas, and drawing inferences, that enabled a pack of wolves to plan the combined and well-arranged attack I have attempted to describe? We all know that the natural instinct of the wolf prompts these animals to assemble in packs, and hunt down their prey, either by scent or by speed of foot, and, as long as this succeeds, no other expedient is resorted to. I have no doubt that, in the first instance, the very wolves I saw this morning had attempted to hunt down antelopes in the usual manner. Baffled, however, in the chase, instinct was at fault; and the wolf, if left solely to its blind guidance, must, in the absence of other game, have perished. But hunger, that proverbial sharpener of the human wits, appears also to call forth certain dormant reasoning faculties in the animal; which, under ordinary circumstances, might never have been

developed. The wolf, finding that instinct has deceived him, refuses to be longer guided by a blind impulse, and begins for the first time to think. He abandons the natural habits of his race, and, in concert with his fellow-wolves, plans and executes an ingenious stratagem, worthy of the reasoning powers of man himself; a complicated manœuvre, not only arguing considerable sagacity on the part of individuals, but implying that a mutual understanding exists among the performers, which it appears to me can only be accounted for on the supposition that animals possess some power unknown to us, of communicating their ideas to each other.*

May 29th.—To Hurryhur fifteen miles; crossed the Toongabudra river—commonly pronounced Tumbudra—on the right bank of which stands the small and lately-established cantonment of Hurryhur. The sandy bed of the Toongabudra is a quarter of a mile in breadth; and during the rains is filled by a wide and rapid river, which, however, at this season, dwindles down to a mere stream, fordable on horseback. A group of coy Hindoo maidens were disporting themselves in the transparent water as we passed. Their slight drapery, saturated with wet, and clinging to their graceful forms as they shrank with instinctive modesty from the unhallowed gaze of the 'Feringhee,' displayed to the

* I have witnessed similar instances of crafty concert on the part of the wolf. On one occasion three gazelles passed just ahead of me at full speed, pursued by a single wolf, towards a nullah a little below me. Two of the gazelles bounded up the ascent on the other side, but neither the third nor the wolf appeared. Anxious to see what had become of them, I cantered down to the spot where they had crossed. There I found the poor antelope in the jaws of three wolves, which took to flight on seeing me, and left the venison at my disposal. The wolves had clearly been hunting on a preconcerted plan; two of them having lain *perdu* in the nullah, whilst the third undertook to drive the antelope to the spot where their hidden assailants could spring on them with advantage.—W. E.

greatest advantage that flowing outline and classical contour of figure for which the women of India are so justly celebrated. And as I sat admiring the picturesque group—I could not well avoid doing so, fair reader, for my thirsty horse would insist on drinking—the comparison I drew between the flowing drapery of these nut-brown water nymphs, and the steel-ribbed garments of my fair countrywomen was anything but favourable to the latter. One of them—a dancing-girl from Cashmere, perhaps, for her complexion was very fair, and her arms loaded with massive bangles—was strikingly handsome; so much so, that even Mohadeen the invincible condescended to smile upon her, and twirled his moustaches with a less supercilious air than usual. On riding into the cantonment, I found that the regiment (the 36th Native Infantry) were in the field, and that the garrison consisted of one company, under the command of Captain Babington, by whom, although a perfect stranger to him, I was received with that hearty hospitality so characteristic of Anglo-Indian society.

Hurryhur, like all newly-established cantonments, is a bare, desolate-looking spot; but has the advantage of being situated in a fine sporting country, the jungles on both sides of the river being plentifully stocked with tigers, bears, wild hog, and deer. This I had previously learned from my brother, who has hunted over the ground; and I was astonished to find that my friend the Captain was profoundly ignorant of the fact; neither he nor his brother officers having any taste for hunting large game, and being quite satisfied to keep the pot boiling with a few pea-fowl and partridges.

We spent a pleasant evening, and, in the course of conversation over a bottle of cool claret, I learned from Captain Babington that our destination is Nugger or Bednore, a strong

hill-fort among the Western Ghauts. In the time of Tippoo, Bednore was a place of great strength and importance. It was taken by General Mathews in 1783, with treasure to the amount of many lacs of rupees ; but was shortly after retaken by Tippoo, and the garrison made prisoners.

It appears that a revolt has taken place in the northern parts of Mysore. Our subsidiary force has been called out to aid the Rajah against his rebellious subjects. He and Mr. Cassmajor, the Resident, have hitherto marched triumphant through the country ; retaking forts, burning villages, and hanging rebels. Bednore, however, has checked their further progress. The Rajah and his subsidiaries, after a fruitless attempt to take it, were repulsed, with the loss of their baggage ; and our two flank companies, with a brigade of twelve-pounders, have consequently been ordered up to reinforce them. The force under Colonel Evans is to assemble, the day after to-morrow, at Shemoga—a village on the outskirts of the forest, about fifty-five miles from hence—and we march against Nugger immediately.

It being reported that the country through which I am to march to-morrow is infested by marauding bands of the enemy, and that the principal road is stockaded, Captain Babington has kindly procured for me an escort of six native troopers, and a guide to conduct us across country, by paths where our progress is less likely to be opposed. I have dismissed my friend Mohadeen with a gratuity of a few rupees. I felt quite sorry to part with the fellow, who, in spite of his dandyism, is the most soldier-like specimen of a 'sowar' I have seen, and makes himself exceedingly useful on a march. The regret at parting is evidently mutual ; but whether the feeling on his part is occasioned by the loss of my society, or disappointment at not being allowed to share in the plunder

and massacre of the unfortunate Mysore villagers, I shall not venture to say ; perhaps there is a mixture of both feelings.

May 30th.—To Honhully, thirty miles. Marched at daybreak. My guide, or guides—for they relieved each other at every village—being on foot, our march was, of necessity, slow and tedious ; and we did not reach our halting-place till four in the afternoon. The heat was intense, and both my horse and I were completely knocked up ; neither of us having tasted anything but a draught of muddy water since three o'clock yesterday. I intended to have breakfasted half way ; but my servants, with the provisions, lagged behind, and after waiting for an hour without seeing any signs of them, I was obliged to proceed on an empty stomach. I was a young campaigner in those days, and carried pistols in my holsters ; but I soon learned to turn these useful appendages to better account, by thrusting into one a flask of brandy, and into the other a cold fowl or tongue, wrapped in paper, with a couple of hard biscuits on the top of it ; and, depend upon it, gentle reader, that in campaigning, you will quite as often find occasion for such munitions of war, as for the more legitimate furniture of your holsters.

The moment we arrived at our ground, my undisciplined escort dismissed themselves without waiting for the word of command—probably to go in search of plunder, for I never saw more of them ; and before I had time to look round me, I found myself without a single follower, sitting on my tired horse in the middle of the bazaar, the gazing-stock of a hundred gaping natives. In vain did I try to make myself understood in broken Hindostanee. Hindostanee was not the language spoken in that district, and my gaping audience merely shook their heads with a look of wonder, totally unable to comprehend how a 'Sahib Logue' came to be there

so dust-begrimed, and without any attendants; for even my horsekeeper, an active fellow in general, had been unable to keep up with me, in consequence of having run a thorn into his foot.

Finding it impossible to make myself understood, or at least to derive any benefit from talking, I pushed through the crowd, in no very amiable mood, and began to seek about for some place of shelter from the merciless rays of the sun—for this being a part of the country unfrequented by Europeans, there are no public bungalows. I soon discovered 'a choultry' or open shed, supported by stone pillars. To one of these I tied my horse, and having unsaddled him, proceeded to rub him down, much to the amusement of a crowd of idle natives, who lounged about with cheroots in their mouths, or squatted on their heels, inhaling the fumes of the fragrant 'kalyoon,' and marvelling greatly at the unwonted sight. Having made my horse as comfortable as circumstances would permit, and thrown my cloak over his loins to protect him from a stroke of the land-wind; I tightened my belt a couple of holes, in hopes of relieving that disagreeable feeling of inanition which nature so properly abhors, seated myself in a corner of the shed, and lighting a cheroot, prepared to wait with the patience of a Mussulman, till the finger of destiny should point to food.

It was an hour after nightfall—still no signs of my followers—and I was about to lie down in the desperate hope of sleeping off my hunger; when, to my no small satisfaction, some charitable pagan—a respectable-looking man, who fortunately understood my broken Hindostanee—came to the rescue, and kindly asked if he could be of any service to me. I replied, that food for myself and forage for my horse would be most acceptable, as neither of us had broken our fast for

upwards of four-and-twenty hours. The forage was speedily produced, and in half an hour my charitable friend returned with a blazing torch, an earthen vessel full of water, and a glorious mess of curry and rice, neatly arranged on a plantain-leaf. Never was a mess of curry more welcome. I rewarded my benefactor with thanks and rupees, both of which he appeared to like exceedingly; and having eaten to my heart's content, I laid myself down in a corner, with my saddle for a pillow, and was soon in the land of dreams; the last sounds I heard being the satisfactory champing of my horse's busy jaws.

I was aroused from my slumbers about midnight, by the apparition of a native horseman, armed to the teeth, who, to my astonishment, handed me a little three-cornered billet. By the light of a torch I read the contents, and found it was a note from the Major commanding our detachment, informing me that he had sent a small party of the Rajah's cavalry, in command of the bearer, to escort me into camp next morning. A sleepy 'all's right,' with an order to parade at daybreak, dismissed the trooper, and in five minutes I was again snoring on my saddle.

May 31*st*.—To Shemoga, twenty-five miles.—My missing followers arrived a little before daylight, declaring that they had marched all night. This may be true, but if so, they must have slept all yesterday. I accordingly administered a little wholesome chastisement to rouse the dormant energies of Heels, my 'maty-boy' and interpreter—an unmitigated rogue, and lazy withal—and mounting my horse, I leave my belongings to follow as they may. When I shall see them again, Heaven only knows.

Having no occasion for a guide to-day, we cantered merrily along, and reached Shemoga in time for breakfast.

My escort, consisting of six 'sowars,' are well mounted on tall, active, native horses, and armed with swords and long Mahratta spears. Their bodies are protected by a peculiar sort of defensive armour, formed of pads of quilted cotton, in the form of a back and breast-plate, sufficiently thick to resist a sword-cut; and their heads are equally well defended by a heavy turban, bound under the chin by a scarf. During the Mahratta war, this head-piece proved a complete puzzle to our dragoons, who strove in vain to make any impression on it with their sabres; till some cunning old trooper hit upon the expedient of dexterously pushing the turban aside with the point of his sword, and immediately bringing down the edge on the exposed part of the skull; after which the unhorsing of a Mahratta warrior became a comparatively easy task.

The quilted cuirass, although an effectual defence against sword-cuts, often proves fatal to the wearer, particularly when wounded, by accidentally taking fire; in which case it is next to impossible, without the aid of water, to extinguish the inflammable materials of which it is composed. And on a battle-field in India, it is no uncommon thing to see wounded wretches writhing in torture; while their cotton armour, accidentally ignited by the flash of a pistol, or the burning matches of those who lie around them, is consuming them in a smouldering fire.

An officer, who had served with 'Skinner's Horse, during the Mahratta and Pindaree wars, related to me a curious instance of such an accident occurring.

He was in chase of a party of native horsemen which they had charged and routed. On coming up with the nearest fugitive, he drew a pistol from his holster, and discharged it within a few inches of the man's back. It appears

that the bullet—which he afterwards found in the holster—had dropped out in the act of galloping, and the shot, of course, did not take any immediate effect. But, unfortunately for the poor Mahratta, the flash of the pistol, or the wadding, ignited his quilted armour, which, by the rapid motion of the horse, was soon fanned into a blaze. His course was easily traced across the plain by the line of smoke that streamed behind him, and before he was out of sight, he was seen to drop from his horse, apparently insensible, and no doubt perished miserably. So much for the defensive qualities of cotton armour.

The country through which we marched this morning bore fearful traces of the sanguinary style of warfare that has been carried on. No quarter to men bearing arms, and a dog's death to those taken without them. Every village deserted—many of them reduced to ashes—the fields uncultivated—the cattle running wild—and mangled corpses lying exposed by the road-side, or dangling in clusters from the horizontal branches of the banian trees. Such sights are at all times revolting; but become doubly so when contrasted with beautiful scenery.

I was particularly struck by the painful contrast thus afforded by one of the deserted villages we passed. It was a lovely spot, situated in a valley surrounded by wooded hills, flanked on one side by a luxuriant mango 'tope,' and on the other by an extensive tank, or artificial lake, formed by damming up the waters of the valley. Countless flocks of wild-fowl sported on the surface of the sparkling water; the scarlet-winged flamingoes waded in the shallows; and the stately pelican—his cumbrous beak reposing on his well-filled crop—sat brooding on the bank with a grave and thoughtful air, as if—after having gorged himself to satiety with the

good things of this life—he was moralizing, like an 'unfledged biped,' on the vanity of worldly pleasures in general, and the sensual indulgence of appetite in particular. Herds of cattle, fast relapsing into their primitive state of wildness, were browsing on the green herbage; the morning air was filled with perfume, and all appeared peace and happiness.

Such was the aspect presented by this romantic spot, as I scanned it with my telescope from a neighbouring height. But, on a nearer approach, how sadly was the scene changed!

As we advanced, the perfumed air became tainted with the smell of carrion; the startled wild-fowl flew screaming from the presence of man, the destroyer; and the terrified cattle, with distended nostrils and tails erect, dashed wildly into the surrounding jungle. And well might they do so, for fearful traces of man's ferocity were there.

The mud walls of the huts, roofless and deserted, were blackened by the action of fire; and from the branches of the mango grove hung the bloated corpses of the wretched inhabitants who had once luxuriated in its grateful shade. I counted some fifty of these loathsome objects, and remarked that many of them were gray-headed old men, long past the age for bearing arms, and beardless boys who had not yet attained it; but to the credit of humanity—or inhumanity rather—be it recorded, there were neither women nor absolute children among them. Their fate had probably been violation and slavery.

The bodies, blistered and swollen by the heat of the sun, and mottled with livid spots, indicating an advanced stage of decay, presented a ghastly spectacle. The feet and legs had been gnawed away by jackals and pariah-dogs as high as they could reach; the eyes had been picked from their sockets,

and the upper parts of the body mangled by the carrion vultures. And flocks of these obscene birds roosted on the branches overhead, or hopped along the ground, so thoroughly gorged as to be incapable of flight.

I was turning with disgust from the unhallowed spot, when I observed the emaciated figure of a man creeping down the dry bed of a neighbouring water-course, and evidently striving to gain a place of concealment among the ruined huts. The leading sowar caught sight of him at the same moment, and his grim features lighted up with a fiendish smile.

"Inshalla! here is some sport at last! Let us hunt the unsainted Kaffer, and spear him like a dog."

So saying, he couched his lance, and started at speed, as if in pursuit of a boar, followed by his willing myrmidons, shouting with savage glee. It was in vain that I called to them to halt. I might as well have tried to check the fury of a whirlwind. And were it not that little Turquoise outstripped the sowar troopers in speed, the poor unarmed ryot would have been murdered in cold blood. As it was, I just managed, by dint of hard riding, to overtake the leading horseman, and strike up his lance as he was about to pin the poor fellow against the mud-wall of a hut. So enraged was I at this act of cold-blooded cruelty, that in the excitement of the moment I felt half inclined to run the offender through with the hog-spear I happened to have in my hand; but contented myself with dealing him a blow over the head with the shaft, that made him reel in his saddle, swearing by the beard of the Prophet to give him a taste of the point if he ever attempted such sport again. The brute looked sulky, but did not venture to remonstrate, and rode off with the air of a rated hound.

The poor fellow whom I had rescued prostrated himself

before me, trembling from head to foot; and raising his clasped hands over his head, rubbed his forehead in the dust. Whether he intended to express his gratitude, or to beg his life, I know not; for fear appeared to have deprived him of the power of speech. But the latter was probably his motive; for on telling him he was at liberty to depart, he gazed upon me for a moment with a wild look of incredulity, and springing to his feet, darted into the nearest hut, as if fearful that I might repent an act of such unwonted clemency. As I passed the open doorway, I looked in, and saw the poor fellow kneeling by the side of a pretty young woman, evidently his wife, who, squatted in a corner like a hare in her form, clasped an infant to her breast, keeping her large black eyes fixed on me with a look of intense fear, that reminded me more of a wild animal than a human being. My first impulse was to dismount, and attempt to allay her fears; but on my making a motion to do so, she shrank together with a convulsive shudder, and cast upon me a look of such unutterable terror, that I saw at once the attempt would be in vain. I therefore threw a couple of rupees towards her, and, waving my hand in token of goodwill, rode after my escort.

We met with no further adventure, and reached Shemoga by ten o'clock. Here I found that the troops had marched that morning to Gazinore; but fortunately for me, a squadron of the 7th Native Cavalry had been left as a rear-guard, so that I got a good breakfast, and some 'gram' for my horse

From the officers of the 7th Cavalry I obtained some information regarding my friends the sowars, which confirms the opinion I had formed of them as bullies and cowards; and fully accounts for the revengeful feelings they entertain towards the unfortunate villagers. Their principal object being plunder, they have no stomach for fighting where no-

thing is to be gained by it. And although some two thousand of these irregular horse have now been in the field for nearly three months, the only service they have hitherto performed has been in burning a few villages, enacting the part of hangman—an office in which they greatly delight—murdering unarmed men, and carrying off women and children. When opposed to an armed force they have almost invariably been routed. And so hateful have they made themselves, by their cold-blooded cruelty, and insatiable thirst for plunder, that those who have fallen into the hands of the enemy have invariably been put to death, with the exception of two or three solitary individuals, who have been sent back, minus nose and ears, to tell the fate of their companions.*

"And the devil mend them, the dirty spalpeens!" concluded my informant (a rattle-headed young Irishman), "for a set of bigger blackguards you won't find out of Tipperary!"

My division having only marched seven miles, I started after lunch to overtake it—having previously dismissed my escort of Mysore troopers—and got into camp before sunset.

* These were undisciplined troops. The Irregular Cavalry, drilled and commanded by European officers, make splendid soldiers, provided they have a thorough dare-devil, such as Skinner, to command them. But they are not easily managed; and it requires a man of very determined character, and one thoroughly acquainted with the peculiarities of the natives, to do so.

CHAPTER XV.

THE CAMP AND THE FIELD.

The sun was dipping behind a dense line of forest which bounded the horizon, as I reached the top of a rising ground commanding a view of the camp, and I pulled up in admiration of the strikingly picturesque scene which presented itself. The long regular lines of tents, extending nearly a mile, were broken at intervals by stately trees scattered over the plain, like skirmishers covering the main body of forest, which formed the background of the picture. Under the shade of these trees were groups of native servants, engaged in cooking their frugal meal of boiled rice ; and handsome Arab horses, straining at their pickets, pawed the ground and neighed impatiently, as they watched the approach of their respective grooms, each bearing a well-filled nose-bag, containing their evening feed. Thousands of figures, in every variety of costume, from the stiff uniform of the European soldier, to the flowing robes of the Hindoo dancing-girl, flitted among the tents, giving life and animation to the scene. Here the horses of a cavalry regiment stood picketted in formal lines ; and there droves of camels and baggage-bullocks lay huddled together among carts, and waggons, and bales of goods, in less regular, but more picturesque groups. On the open space in front of the lines, the troops were drawn up for evening parade ; and in rear of the camp, a gaudy flag, flashing in the last rays of the setting sun, indicated the position of the

native bazaar, swarming with dusky figures, and sending forth a busy hum of human voices. In the immediate foreground, a group of baggage-elephants, each guided by a little naked urchin, the son of the 'mahout,' or driver, were returning from water with that grave air and stately step, so characteristic of the animal, and lazily whisking off the flies with palm branches which they carried in their trunks. It was strange to see these gigantic brutes submitting thus patiently to the delegated authority of their pigmy riders, who, perched like monkeys between the ears of the sagacious animals, plied the iron goad with all their little strength; issuing their orders, in childish accents, but in tones of imperious command. A fine illustration this of the power given to man over the brute creation, when his Maker blessed him and said, "Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth,"—a power, alas! too often abused by fallen man.

The sun dipped behind the dark masses of the forest, and the booming of the evening gun roused me from my reverie.

My first greeting, on entering the camp, was anything but cheering. It was the dead march. The bugles had sounded the retreat, the troops had been dismissed, and the shades of evening were closing in, with the rapidity peculiar to a tropical climate, when the wailing notes of the fife, and measured tap of the muffled drum, announced a soldier's funeral. As the melancholy procession moved past with reversed arms and downcast looks, I learnt from the bystanders that the poor fellow whom they were bearing to his last home was one of the best men in my company. That fatal scourge, Asiatic cholera, made its appearance in camp last night. Two men of the European detachment, consisting of only two companies, were buried this morning, and this is the third

victim. Two other Europeans have been attacked, and the pestilence is already raging among the native troops. Little did I dream as I gazed on the animated scene a few minutes before, that death was so busy here.

On riding up to the regimental mess-tent, I found my brother officers seated in front of it, sipping their claret, and smoking their cheroots, and I was forthwith surrounded by a group of lighthearted 'subs,' who welcomed my return with three cheers for '*The Jungle Wallah*,'* and then, without any apparent cause, burst out into fits of uncontrollable laughter. The melancholy procession I had met, on entering the camp, had not attuned my heart to mirth. I felt as though I had entered the house of mourning, and the joyous laugh of my young companions grated harshly on my ear. But a moment's reflection, and a glance at my uncouth garments, which contrasted strangely enough with the trim scarlet jackets and spotless white trousers of my brother officers, at once explained the cause of their mirth, and I was fain to join in the laugh against myself as heartily as any one.

The fact is, I have lived so much in the jungles of late, and my eye has become so accustomed to the strange dress and accoutrements of an Indian hunter, that, till the moment I halted in front of the mess-tent, I had never bestowed a thought on the Robinson-Crusoe-like figure I presented, nor the impropriety, in a military point of view, of thus appearing in camp to report myself to a superior officer.

Fancy a dust-begrimed figure, with a face tanned to the colour, and nearly to the consistency, of an old buff jerkin, seated on a handsome Arab horse, but clothed in an old greasy fustian jacket, with brown cord breeches to match;

* Literally jungle-man—wild man of the woods—my regimental nickname.

without either neckcloth or waistcoat; his head covered by a hunting-cap of half-dressed buffalo leather; and his legs cased in long leggings of deer-skin; a belt of leopard-skin buckled round his waist, supporting on one side an ammunition-pouch of the same material, and on the other a long hunting-knife with a buck-horn handle mounted in silver; a double-barrelled rifle slung at his back, and a hog-spear grasped in his right hand. Fancy the half-cleaned skull of a wolf protruding its grinning muzzle from under the flap of one holster, and the tail of a rare species of squirrel, picked up on the line of march, dangling from the other —and you will have some idea of my personal appearance, and of what the senior subaltern of the Light Company should *not* look like, when he joins his regiment on service.

Fortunately for me, the major commanding our detachment (a pompous old gentleman, and a very martinet with regard to dress), was one of the party who witnessed my arrival. On my first appearance his chin was drawn down into his stiff military stock (an article of dress which he never dispensed with even in the hottest weather), and an ominous scowl indicated a coming storm. But mirth is infectious. The merry laughter of my brother subs overcame the gravity of the major. The frown relaxed into a smile, the smile into a hearty laugh, and a kindly shake of the hand satisfied me I had escaped the wigging I so well deserved.

Having neither tent, baggage, nor servants; and there being no chance of my seeing them for some days to come, if ever; I am, for the present, thrown entirely on the charity of my friends. Gwynne, my brother subaltern of the Light Company, has kindly offered me half his tent, and the services of his horsekeeper to look after my trusty steed 'Turquoise;'

and the others are so liberal in their offers of spare garments, that I expect to turn out to-morrow with a better furnished kit than I have had for some time back.

I am delighted to learn that my worthy friend Doctor Macphee, who left Dharwar some time ago to join our regiment in the capacity of assistant-surgeon, accompanies our detachment; but having his hands full in the hospital-tent, I have not yet had the pleasure of seeing him.

Several fresh cases of cholera reported this evening. Poor Babington of the 36th is, I regret to say, one of the sufferers.

June 1st.—To Mundiguddy, twelve miles.—Marched at two o'clock A.M., and entered the outskirts of the forest. The road being extremely bad, and having experienced considerable difficulty in getting the guns along, we did not reach our camping ground till eleven A.M.

Our force consists of the 9th, 15th, 24th, and 36th Regiments of Native Infantry, a squadron of the 7th Native Cavalry, two twelve-pounders, four six-pounders, and a six-inch howitzer, besides our two Flank Companies. We have also about a thousand Irregular Troops, and a few small guns belonging to the Rajah of Mysore, but these, as my friend the Doctor remarks, "are no greatly to be lippened to."

Poor Babington of the 36th Native Infantry, who was attacked with cholera last night, is no more. His death has been sudden and unexpected. At ten o'clock this morning, I was riding by the side of his palanquin, and talking to him. He appeared much better, and was cheerful, although distressingly weak. Even the medical men thought the crisis had passed, and that there was now a fair prospect of his recovery.

But this was not to be. At five o'clock in the evening, I was following his body to the grave. The tedious march had probably proved too much for his exhausted strength, and he

expired soon after we had encamped. In a wild nook of the forest, uncoffined, without a stone to mark where he is laid, he reposes in his shallow grave, at the root of a stately teak-tree. The prowling wolf and shrieking hyæna are now singing his dirge. Such, alas, is too often the fate of many a gallant youth, who goes forth to fight the battles of his country in the East. But, if it be well with the immortal spirit, what matters it how or where the poor mortal body be put out of sight of the living? It will rise as surely, at the last day, from under the shade of the forest-tree, as from under a marble monument in Westminster Abbey. And he who has engraved his memory on the hearts of his brother officers, needs no other epitaph. Poor Babington was much beloved in his regiment, and his untimely death has cast a gloom over the whole camp.

A man of my company also died to-day and was buried in the evening. I, as orderly officer of the day, had the melancholy duty of reading the funeral service over his remains—a melancholy duty, but a solemn and impressive one, particularly when he who performs it feels that ere the setting of to-morrow's sun he himself may be

> "Perchance a thing
> O'er which the raven flaps his funeral wing."

As long as this scourge of the human race follows us, it must have its daily victims, and none can tell who may be taken next. But there is One above without whose permission not even a sparrow falls to the ground; and in Him must we put our trust.

June 2*d*.—To Milloor, eleven miles.—We have now got well into the forest, the scenery of which is very grand, but the air of the woods close and oppressive.

I have remarked in the course of this day's march that the trees, which on the outskirts of the forest were small and of no great age, have gradually increased in size as we advanced farther into it. This looks as if the forest were gradually extending itself; and such, I believe, is actually the case.

During the religious persecutions of 'Tippoo Sahib' whole districts were depopulated. The villages were deserted, the fields left uncultivated; and so rapid is the growth of tropical vegetation that, at the present day, ruins of Hindoo temples, which in Tippoo's time graced the centre of a thriving village, may now be found many leagues from any human habitation, buried in the gloom of what appears to be a primeval forest.

We are now encamped on an extensive 'midān,' a plain surrounded on all sides by heavy forest timber, apparently of great age, the intervals between the trees being filled up by a tangled undergrowth of evergreens, thorny shrubs, and creepers, so dense as to be impervious to anything but wild animals. There appears to be an abundance of game. Their tracks are numerous; and about daylight this morning a 'sounder' of wild hog, and several deer, crossed our line of march. I had command of the advanced guard, and being as usual attended by my horsekeeper bearing a loaded rifle, I was sorely tempted to take a shot; but my orders being peremptory not to give a false alarm by firing at game, I was reluctantly obliged to hold my hand.

The Resident of Mysore joined the camp yesterday, and has gone on a day's march in advance, escorted by the 24th Regiment Native Infantry, a body of Irregular Cavalry, and a six-pounder.

Two more men of my company died this morning on the

line of march, and were buried as soon as we reached our ground. The deaths among the native followers have been numerous.

Just as we had pitched our tents and were going to breakfast, we observed a small body of the enemy skulking among the jungle on a wooded height overlooking the camp, as if for the purpose of reconnoitring.

The rifle company of the 36th Native Infantry was ordered to dislodge them, and did so in double quick time, bringing back two prisoners, whom we keep to act as guides.

In the course of the forenoon heard some sharp firing about four miles in our front, from which we conclude the Resident's escort has had some skirmishing.

June 3d.—To Argah, thirteen miles.—A few miles from camp found the bodies of two Brahmins with their arms pinioned, and their throats cut—not a pleasant sight before breakfast. The poor fellows had been sent on the day before by the Resident, with an offer of pardon to such of the insurgents as chose to return to their allegiance, and thus have they been rewarded for their friendly intentions; a little further on we found the bodies of ten or twelve country-people who had accepted the Resident's offer of pardon, and had been butchered by their more warlike companions in arms for deserting their cause. This looks as if they have resolved to fight it out.

Received a dispatch from the Resident, which accounts for the firing we heard yesterday. He was not openly attacked, but annoyed on the line of march by concealed skirmishers firing from the jungle on both flanks. The six-pounder was accordingly brought into play, and by firing grape-shot into the jungle the skirmishers were speedily dislodged. This little artillery practice appears to have had a

salutary effect, as we were not annoyed by a single shot during the march. We found the bodies of two or three of the enemy who had been mortally wounded by the grape-shot and had just sufficient strength left to crawl out into the road before they died. I examined one who had just expired and was still warm. He was shot through the neck, and his features were hideously distorted. He had a quantity of ammunition about him, and the match used in firing his matchlock was still burning. I took possession of his stock of ammunition to keep as a specimen of native manufacture. The bullets, which appear to have been cut out in cubes and then hammered into an irregular globular form, were carried in a hollow joint of bamboo slung over the shoulder, and the powder, which was very coarse, unglazed, and apparently containing an undue proportion of charcoal, was contained in a small cocoa-nut shell, hollowed out by means of a small orifice at one end, neatly covered with antelope skin, and secured by a wooden stopper.

June 4th.—To Chindranuggy, ten miles.—The miserable road we have hitherto traversed has now dwindled into a rugged footpath, with an impenetrable forest-jungle on either side; and we are, in consequence, obliged to make a road for the guns as we proceed—very hard work for the men. The rains, too, have just commenced; and for the next month we must not look for much comfort under canvas.

June 5th.—To Yeddoor, six miles.—Although this was a short march in point of distance, it has been the longest in time, and the most severe work, we have yet had. We marched at two A.M., and did not get to our ground till one P.M., the rain coming down in buckets-full the whole time, and the ground a perfect sea of mud. We had to make a road for the guns the whole way, and after all have not been able to

bring up either them or the baggage ; we left them, not quite half way, tumbling along and upsetting about every hundred yards ; and as the latter half of the road is much the worst, there is not much chance of their getting in to-night. A pleasant prospect for the artillerymen and rear-guard, who of course started without breakfast, and have neither grog nor provisions with them. We ourselves are not over comfortable, as we have only been able to get up two or three tents, which, fortunately for us, were carried by elephants, and our stock of provisions is wofully scanty.

About nine P.M., finding there was no prospect of the rear-guard getting in that night, Ellis, my brother subaltern, and I, conceived the bright idea of asking the Light Company to volunteer for duty, and marching them out to relieve their comrades—no sooner said than done. The gallant Light Bobs responded to our proposal with a cheer ; torches were procured from the bazaar, and away we started. The rain still came down in torrents, the wind roared through the trees, and the night—as one of the men elegantly described it—was as dark as if the devil himself had made it his particular business to see 'all lights out.' The wind and rain soon extinguished our torches, and we speedily lost our way in the forest ; but by means of shouting we managed to keep together, and after two hours' hard work succeeded in finding the rear-guard. The poor fellows were in a sorry plight, almost exhausted by cold and hunger ; half the carts broken down ; the whole of the bullocks driven to a stand still ; the guns embedded in mud up to the axles ; and the unfortunate gunners crouching under the limbers, in the vain hope of obtaining some shelter from the storm. We had fortunately brought out a small supply of rum and biscuits, which cheered them up a little ; and having relieved the old guard, we made

our way back to camp as well as we could. It was only now —when about to dismiss the men—that it occurred to us that this philanthropic expedition of ours had been undertaken without having obtained leave from our commanding officer; and as our having done so could not be concealed, there was nothing for it but to face the formidable Major, report the return of the old guard, ask leave to dismiss them, and be placed in arrest for our pains. We, however, got off with a good wigging, dismissed our men, and turned in—not into bed, for that is a luxury I do not at present possess—neither do I rejoice in a blanket; but, rolled up in a warm horse-rug, I laid me down by the side of my good little Arab nag 'Turquoise,' and slept like a marine.

'Turquoise' and I arrange our domestic matters in this wise: The weather being too wet for him to sleep out of doors, without some covering, I have allowed him to take shelter in my tent; and, in return, he lends me his rug to sleep in. The tent being very small, there is not much room to spare; but he being the most discreet of horses, never thinks of turning or kicking his legs about at night; and so we sleep, side by side, as comfortably as possible. He is as good as a watch-dog, allowing no one to enter the tent without my leave, and always awakes me in the morning, by pushing me with his nose the moment he hears the bugle sound.

June 6th.—Halt, to enable the guns and baggage to come up. Weather rather better. Lewis and I met with a little adventure to-day. We walked out after breakfast to a wooded hill about half a mile off, for the purpose of taking a sketch of the camp. Lewis had just commenced his sketch, and I was looking over him, when I heard a slight rustling sound as if some animal had moved among the bushes behind me, and turning suddenly round, caught a glimpse of a native

—one of the enemy's scouts—peeping from behind a tree, and just in the act of raising his matchlock to take a pot-shot at us.

Not expecting to find either game or enemies so near camp, I had neglected to bring my rifle, and had not even my sword with me ; so seeing there was nothing else for it, I picked up a large stone, flung it at his head, and, uttering a savage yell, charged right at him, followed by Lewis, with a stone in each hand heavy enough to fell an ox. This combined display of Anglo-Saxon and Celtic ferocity was too much for the nerves of poor Blacky, who turning tail, without attempting to fire, scuttled down the hill and disappeared in the jungle. After this specimen of jungle society, we deemed it expedient to postpone the finishing of the sketch to a more convenient season, and made the best of our way back to camp ; then and there registering a vow never to go sketching again in an enemy's country unarmed.

June 7th—To Hoolcul, seven miles.—Better road than usual, although still heavy from the rains, and some difficulty in getting the guns up. It was interesting, on the line of march, to remark the extraordinary sagacity displayed by the elephants attached to each battery, in helping them out of the numerous difficulties they encountered. The elephants employed for this purpose have their foreheads covered by a strong leathern shield, to protect it from injury when pushing against the guns. Whenever a gun 'comes to grief' by sticking in a quagmire, one of these sagacious brutes is brought up to assist it out of the difficulty. With the important air of an experienced engineer, he marches up and deliberately examines the state of affairs. Twisting his trunk round the spoke of one wheel, he gives it a lift, as if to ascertain the depth and tenacity of the mud, then quietly walks round and

does the same by the other wheel, dropping it again with a knowing twinkle of the eye, as if he said to himself, "All right! I can start her, I think." Then he deliberates for some minutes, giving a slight push here, and a slight pull there. When, having at last made up his mind as to the best mode of proceeding, he probably applies his forehead to the muzzle of the gun, and uttering a shrill, trumpet-like sound—as a signal for the gun-bullocks to pull together—pushes against it with his massive weight, which, if the bullocks obey the signal, is generally sufficient to start the gun. But sometimes, when bullocks are over-driven or sulky, they refuse to obey the signal, and it is then amusing to witness the indignation of the elephant. I have seen him spring up with a scream of rage, and, brandishing his trunk, rush at the team of bullocks as if to take summary vengeance on either them or their drivers; and this threat generally produces the desired effect. We are now within one day's march of Nugger, and to-morrow must decide its fate.

June 8th.—Our campaign is ended, and Nugger has fallen, almost without resistance. 'A very lame and impotent conclusion.' No enemy, beyond a few skirmishers, opposed our advance; a couple of guns placed against the gate blew it open; and as we marched into the fort, the enemy marched out at the opposite side. Just as they crossed the ridge of the hill, behind which they disappeared, they halted and fired; but a single round of grape, which killed four men, and severely wounded their chief (who afterwards had his leg amputated by my friend Macphee), sufficed to disperse them, and we remained undisputed masters of the place. In the evening we strolled out to inspect the fort—a fortified hill overlooking the pettah or native town. The outer walls of the town extend about eight miles in circumference, but

being built of mud, without either ditch or glacis, are not formidable defences; the only part at all strong being the gate at Futtypett, where, by some unaccountable mistake, the first attack was made, and our troops repulsed with the loss of part of their baggage. The fort itself is well built and strongly fortified, but not well armed. We only found some ten or twelve guns, most of them of large calibre, but so mounted that they could not be traversed, and all pointed in the direction of the Futtypett gate, which accounts for our having got in on the opposite side with so little difficulty. They were all loaded nearly to the muzzle with grape-shot, old iron, and other rubbish, and, had they been fired, would probably have burst, and done quite as much execution among friends as foes. In short, I do not feel particularly elated at the result of my first victorious campaign.

Poor Paton of the 15th died this morning of cholera; and his death-bed scene affords rather a striking instance of the callous feeling which a familiarity with death engenders. Directly after the fort had been taken, we adjourned to the mess-tent to breakfast. This being the only tent pitched, Paton, who had been carried along the line of march in a hospital doolie, was brought in and placed in our tent to be sheltered from the sun till the other tents arrived. We were enjoying the good things provided for us by our excellent mess-man, with the wolfish appetite of hungry subalterns, laughing and joking over our almost bloodless victory; when a gasping gurgling sound attracted my attention to the hospital doolie, which had been deposited in a corner of the tent almost without our observing it. Starting from my seat, I pulled aside the canvas covering; and there lay poor Paton insensible, and with the death-rattle in his throat. Raising him in my arms, I wiped the cold dew of death from his forehead—sup-

ported him for a few minutes till he had drawn his last breath—laid him gently down—dropped the curtains of the doolie—and, heaving one sigh for our departed comrade, we all resumed our breakfast as if nothing particular had happened. Death has become too familiar to us to elicit any further remark on such an everyday occurrence.

The orders are to halt here to-morrow, but to hold ourselves in readiness to march at a moment's notice.

June 9th.—As there is now a prospect of our remaining here for a few days, we have been allowed to make ourselves comfortable by striking our tents and taking up our quarters in the fort.

The quarters appropriated to us Europeans is an old palace, once the residence of Tippoo Sahib. The men are quartered on the ground-floor, and we have taken possession of a large room above. This room is divided down the centre by a row of pillars; so that by extending the sides of our tents along them, and between each pillar and the wall, we have divided one half of the room into little stalls or cells, which we use as sleeping apartments; the other half, being left open, serves as a mess-room. We have lighted a large fire in the verandah, by which we are drying our wet things—the first chance we have had for the last week—and our little dens are so snug, that we look forward with no small satisfaction to a comfortable night's rest in dry clothes.

June 10th.—I awoke this morning with the feeling that I had never enjoyed so comfortable a night. Not that my bed was luxurious, it was merely the softest plank I could find, and a blanket. But then the blanket was dry, and we were not roused at two A.M. by that sound of drums and fifes—

'Abhorred of gods and men'—

known as "The general," and to which soldiers have wedded the following pithy but not very elegant words—

> "Don't you hear the 'General' say,
> Strike your tents and march away!
> He be d——d and he be c—s'd
> That ever played that 'General' first."

Pray don't be shocked, gentle reader. If you have ever had the bad fortune to oversleep yourself on a march, and found yourself rudely awakened at two A.M. on a wet morning, by having your tent suddenly pulled down over your head—for down all tents must come at the last sound of the bugle—you will feel inclined to be lenient in your criticism of the rude soldier's stanza.

Talking of sleep reminds me of a little incident which occurred on the line of march the other day. We had started at two A.M., after a long day's work, and a wet night under canvas, and the poor fellows were so overcome by fatigue, that before we had marched two miles half the column were dozing, and actually walking in their sleep. One of the grenadiers, going along in this way, stumbled over the trunk of a fallen tree, and came sprawling to the ground. On recovering himself he exclaimed to his comrade, "I say, Jack, what a precious d——d country this is to march in; a fellow can't take a quiet snooze along the road without the risk of breaking his neck!"

June 12th.—After a halt of three days we started this morning on our way back to Bangalore. Only marched as far as Futtypett, and encamped outside the fortifications. Some of our people, going for water to a well near the camp, were rather surprised, and not a little disgusted, to find it nearly half full of dead bodies, in the last stage of decompo-

sition. These were the remains of the men who had fallen during the first unsuccessful attack made by the Native Troops about three weeks ago; and which the insurgents, either to save the trouble of burying them, or on purpose to render the water unfit for our use, had pitched into the well. I need hardly add that, if they had the latter object in view, they succeeded perfectly, and that we were obliged to seek for water elsewhere. Talking of insurgents, I forgot to mention the rather severe practical joke they perpetrated on an unfortunate 'Tapall,' or letter-carrier, whom they took prisoner a few days ago, when on his way to camp with important dispatches. The letter-bag was of course opened, and the dispatches taken possession of; and on the poor fellow remonstrating against this—stating that it was as much as his head was worth to go into camp with an empty bag—'Rungapah Naik,' the chief of the insurgent party, coolly replied, that he could easily furnish him with a voucher which would save his head. Accordingly, drawing his hunting-knife, he cut off the Tapall's ears, placed them carefully in the bag from which the dispatches had been abstracted, and desired him to proceed with all speed to the British camp, and present them to the commanding officer with his respectful compliments. The poor fellow, too glad to escape so easily, lost no time in executing his commission; and came trotting into camp with his bloody ears in the bag, by way of vouchers to the truth of his story.

It was perhaps as well for him that he did bring a *receipt*, even at the expense of his ears; for the Colonel is somewhat short in the temper, and suspicious withal. It is generally a word and a blow with him, and sometimes the blow first. The day before we entered Nugger, we had taken a native prisoner, and marched him at the head of the column,

with a rope round his neck, to act as guide; having previously informed him, that if he led us into an ambuscade, or otherwise guided us astray, he would, without benefit of clergy, be strung up to the nearest tree. We marched several miles through the jungle, the road becoming more and more difficult at every step; till at last it terminated in a mere track, where the men could only march in single file, and the guns came to a stand-still—'Evident treachery.' The column was halted, and the order given to hang the guide. The rope had already been thrown over the branch of a tree, and the trembling wretch was about to be swung up; when I, having command of the advance-guard, and having fortunately acquired some knowledge of native ways in the jungle, ventured to suggest that I might be allowed to push ahead a short distance, and ascertain whither our guide was leading us, before the sentence was carried into effect. It turned out as I expected. I had not advanced more than a quarter of a mile, before I found myself in open ground. It was evident the poor fellow, not having been accustomed to lead troops, had taken us by a short cut, such as a native hunter would naturally have selected; and had been guiding us to the best of his ability, although he had not taken into consideration the difficulty of dragging guns along the same path through which men could march in single file. So the poor fellow's life was saved; and, with a *blessing* from the Colonel, he was cut adrift, and allowed to escape into the jungle, which he did at his best pace.

One more anecdote, and we shall resume our march.

I mentioned that during the last day's march into Nugger, we were slightly annoyed by skirmishers firing upon us from the jungle. The jungle being very dense on either side of the road, the skirmishers, keeping pace with our advance, climbed

up into trees, took a pot-shot, and dropping to the ground like monkeys, disappeared in the underwood, where our men had no chance of following them; then running ahead climbed another tree, and were ready for another shot, by the time we came up.

A man of the European Artillery—a drunken scamp by the way—was hit by a ball which fractured his jaw; noways disconcerted by the accident, he wheeled round, caught one glimpse of the native marksman, sliding down the stem of a tree, and, taking a snap-shot, dropped him like a squirrel—coolly reloading his piece, he pushed his way into the jungle, and possessed himself of the spoil of the enemy, consisting of a rather handsome matchlock, which he shortly after disposed of to an officer for a few rupees. He was of course sent to hospital, and had his wound dressed; but in the course of the evening, after we had encamped, he managed to escape from the hospital tent, and was found in the bazaar, half drunk, with his broken jaw bandaged up, swaggering about with his hand full of small coins and exclaiming, "There's all I got for shooting a d——d nigger. Can't be done again for the money, I tell you. D——d if it can!!"

CHAPTER XVI.

ON THE MARCH.

June 13*th*.—To Munamhully.—Nothing particular. Rained all the march, as usual. But this we are too well accustomed to to mind it much.

June 14*th*.—To Annantepoor.—I, for my sins, had command of the rear-guard this morning. Although we marched at two A.M., and the distance was only twelve miles, we did not reach our camping ground till one P.M., and during all that time I had to work like a coolie.

The duty of the officer commanding the rear-guard is to remain on the ground, after the troops have marched, till he has seen every tent, every head of cattle, and every camp-follower fairly off; which, on a dark morning, two hours before daylight, with upwards of a thousand lazy natives, restive camels, and half-starved bullocks, is no easy work. Having effected a start, he has to follow in the rear, push on the stragglers, and hold himself responsible that no bullocks or baggage-waggons are left behind: a task requiring an amount of patience worthy of Job.

I shall not attempt to describe the many delays and trials of patience I had to encounter. Suffice it to say, we never advanced a mile without some difficulty. The bullocks were so completely done up, that it was only by incessant goading, and twisting of their tails, that they could be induced to move at all, even along the level ground; but directly we came to a heavy piece of sand, or anything like an ascent, they came

to a dead lock, and not unfrequently lay down. Showers of blows, goading, and twisting of tails, proved alike unavailing, and elicited nothing but groans from the wretched, over-driven beasts. I was at last obliged to fix on ropes in front, order the men of the guard into harness, put my shoulder to the wheel myself, and by main force haul up cart, bullocks, and all; and this pleasing operation we were obliged to repeat at every hill, and with each disabled team. Pleasant this, under a broiling tropical sun, with the thermometer at 95 degrees!!

The villages being all deserted, and the cattle having wandered into the jungle, and become half wild, there is no possibility of obtaining a relay of fresh bullocks. We amused ourselves, therefore, on the line of march, by galloping after every stray beast we saw, in hopes of catching him, and pressing him into the service, but rarely with any success; for the brutes were as wild and nearly as fleet as deer, and generally managed to escape into thick jungle, where it was impossible to follow them. This morning, after a sharp gallop, I succeeded in heading a fine active young bullock, before he could get into cover, and drove him back towards the road, where he arrived so completely blown, that the men of the guard, who immediately surrounded him, had little difficulty in securing him, by casting a slip-knot over his horns. Two men dragging in front, and two others pricking him with their bayonets behind, urged the unwilling captive towards the waggons, an operation which he submitted to with tolerable resignation. But when he found himself surrounded by some twenty red-coated 'Feringees,' all shouting like fiends, and found that these unbelieving Kaffers—'may their beards be defiled'—were resolved upon attaching his sacred carcass to an unclean baggage waggon, he became something more than wroth, and plunged, and kicked, and butted, and bellowed, till his captors

were either knocked over, or lost their hold; and away he went through the crowd, knocking the men right and left like nine-pins. One of them (a man of my company) in his hurry to escape, tumbled, neck and crop, into a prickly bush; the enraged bullock, taking advantage of his position, charged him savagely, and was just on the point of goring him; when I fortunately laid hold of the rope, which was still attached to his horns, and, taking a turn round the stem of a tree, brought him up with a jerk that almost threw him on his side. So far so good! But still poor Pat Malony was in anything but an enviable position. There he lay, in the midst of the bush, extended on his back like a spread eagle, and so completely entangled that he could do nothing but kick—which he did frantically—while the bullock, by this time thoroughly savage, kept bellowing and butting at him, within six inches of the pit of his stomach—a tender and ticklish spot—which Pat protected as well as he could, by drawing it in at each thrust of the horns, till it nearly touched his back-bone, and kicking out like a maniac.

"Ah, murther, murther!!" shouted Pat, bellowing almost as loud as the bullock, "sure it's kilt I am entirely!—Ah, you divil, be aisy now!—Arrah, captain dear, for the love of the blessed Virgin, hould on, or the baste's into me, as sure as the divil's in Dublin."

The scene was so absurdly ludicrous, that, although I expected every moment the rope would give way, and the bullock's horns be sheathed in poor Pat's trembling viscera, I could not resist roaring with laughter. Fortunately for him the rope held fast. Pat, finding that the bullock was secured, recovered his presence of mind, and after a desperate struggle regained his legs, and forced his way through the bush. I 'let go by the run,' and away went the bullock, rope and all,

into the jungle, as if a legion of devils had possessed him. "And the divil go wid him," shouted Pat, wiping the dust and perspiration from his face.

After a hot and weary march, I succeeded in bringing my troublesome charge into camp by two P.M., and, for the rest of the evening, was chaffed by my friend the Doctor for allowing the rear-guard of H.M. troops to be defeated by a 'mad stot.'

June 15th, Annantepoor.—Halt here to-day.—Annantepoor is a large village and prettily situated; but being in the neighbourhood of a large tank, and surrounded by dense jungle, must be feverish and unhealthy. There is nothing particularly worthy of notice except the great gun in the fort, said to have been constructed by Tippoo, but which I think must be of older date; in shape it resembles 'Mons Meg,' and like her is constructed of bars of iron hooped together, but is considerably larger, the diameter of the bore being sufficient to admit a man creeping on hands and knees.

I was greenhorn enough to start alone after breakfast, in hopes of finding a bear which attacked my grass-cutter yesterday evening, close to camp, and wounded him severely. Being unable to procure a native guide of any kind, my chance of finding a bear in this extent of jungle, single-handed—for even my friend the Doctor refused to accompany me—was about equal to that of finding a needle in a haystack; and the natural result of my expedition was that I lost my way in the forest; wandered about till I was sick and faint with heat and fatigue; and by the merest chance managed to regain the camp just before sunset, without having seen the ghost of a bear or anything larger than a monkey.

June 16th.—To Tappoor, a tolerable road, good weather, and easy march. Tappoor is a small village surrounded by forest jungle, which looks promising for game; so, having

managed to find a native hunter in the village, Ellis and I sallied forth under his guidance to explore. The only game we saw was a solitary bull bison, a tiger, a wild boar, and a small herd of deer. Ellis got a running shot at the boar and missed. The tiger having got up within ten yards of us, where we had no vantage ground, and having walked quietly away, after showing us his tusks with a growl which evidently meant 'you'd better not follow me,' we thought it advisable to take the hint and not commence hostilities; so let him depart in peace. I was the more inclined to pursue this pacific line of policy in consequence of an event which occurred the other day just before reaching Nugger, and which I neglected to mention at the time. My friend Mohadeen, the sowar, who acted as my guide and escort from Dharwar, and who afterwards joined the native cavalry, was not merely a lady-killer, but a famous hunter and tiger-slayer; and although on the march to Nugger all shooting was forbidden, he frequently managed to steal out of camp, armed with his matchlock and 'tulwar,' and seldom returned without a head of game of some kind. One morning he went out alone as usual, but did not return; and on his comrades going out to seek for him next day, he was found lying dead, with his discharged matchlock by his side, and under the body of a tiger which was also dead, shot through the heart. It would appear that he had fired at the tiger at close quarters, inflicting a mortal wound; but that the brute had just strength enough to make one spring, and had crushed in his skull by a blow of his paw. It is never advisable, when on foot, to fire at a tiger at close quarters, unless obliged to do so in self-defence; for, hit him where you will, he has generally life enough remaining to make one spring before he falls, and that spring is rather apt to prove fatal.

The herd of spotted-deer, we came upon feeding in an open glade in the forest, and stalked them with good success. Ellis, who had the first shot, knocked over the oldest buck of the herd. I took a snap-shot at the next best, just as they started, and the thud of the bullet announced a hit; but he went on, as if untouched, and disappeared in the jungle. I had, however, heard the thud, and was satisfied. I reloaded my rifle coolly, while Ellis was bleeding his deer, and followed up the track. We soon came upon patches of light frothy blood—a sure sign that the wounded animal has been hit through the lungs, and cannot go far—and about 200 yards beyond the place where we lost sight of the buck, we found him lying dead, and so secured a good supply of venison for the mess. The spotted-deer or 'cheetle' of India is exactly like the fallow deer of this country, with the exception of being rather larger, and not having palmated horns. The venison, I have no doubt, would be quite as good as that of the fallow deer, were it possible to keep it till tender; but in a tropical climate, where animal food must be eaten within twelve hours after it is killed, venison has not fair play, and a haunch, though not to be despised by a hungry sportsman, would hardly suit the palate of a London alderman.

The bison, like the tiger, proved a failure, but we hope for better luck next time. We came upon him suddenly—an old solitary bull. I had just raised my rifle, and was 'drawing a bead on him'—as the Yankees say—when our guide threw up his arms, and uttered a yell more like a hyæna than a human being; and the bull, who had not yet caught sight of us, cocked his tail, and with a wild snort, started off at a gallop. In a furious rage I pitched forward my rifle, fired almost at random, and made a most palpable miss. More savage than ever, I turned upon the unfortunate

native, with the full intention of knocking him down. Accustomed as I had been to the cool courage of old Kamah, under whose auspices I had killed my first bison, it never occurred to me that the sudden appearance of the solitary bull could have frightened my dusky companion out of his wits. I therefore concluded he had been playing off a practical joke, and expected to find him indulging in a broad grin, which I was resolved to transfer to the wrong side of his face. But my wrath subsided when I found the unfortunate creature crouching at my feet, in a supplicating attitude, pale with terror, and trembling in every joint. He implored me never again to be guilty of so rash an act as attempting to fire at one of these 'dreadful beasts,' which he described as 'elephants with horns,' and more to be dreaded than half a dozen tigers. Why the native hunters, who have no extraordinary fear of a bear or tiger, should exhibit such symptoms of terror at the sight of a bison, I could never ascertain; it is probably connected with some superstitious feelings. But so it is. I have never met with native hunters who could be depended upon in bison-shooting, except the 'Seedees,' to which tribe Kamah belonged; and he looked upon them as his private property, over which he had unlimited control. After our encounter with the bison I found it impossible to get any further good out of our guide, so returned to camp.

June 17*th*.—To Eynore.—Ellis and I, instead of marching with the troops, got leave to fall out, and walked through the jungle with our rifles. Having swallowed a cup of coffee, and lighted our cheroots, we started at the first dawn of day, again accompanied by our friend the 'shikári,' whom, for want of better, we were again obliged to take as our guide.

In an open space among the brushwood, on the outskirts of the forest jungle, we came upon a flock of pea-fowl, the

hens feeding quietly, and the cocks strutting about with expanded tails, looking defiance at each other. They were so intent on their different occupations that they hardly appeared to notice our approach, and allowed us to advance within thirty yards of them, before they made off. They would have afforded a tempting shot to a cockney, but we, having got beyond that stage—we flatter ourselves—did not choose to disturb the nobler game we hoped to find, by firing at peafowl; so allowed them to depart in peace, much to the astonishment of our attendant hunter, who evidently thought us a couple of muffs for allowing such a chance to escape.

On entering the forest, we threw away the ends of our cheroots, and proceeded in perfect silence, picking our steps carefully to avoid treading on dry twigs, and keeping a sharp look-out ahead; while the hunter scanned the ground in search of fresh footprints. We proceeded in this manner for about half an hour without seeing anything but a few gray monkeys, which sprang into the trees at our approach, and continued to escort us for some distance by bounding from branch to branch, grinning and chattering at us in their own peculiar manner, as if perfectly aware that we had no hostile intentions towards them individually; but at the same time considering it their duty, as good conservative monkeys, to protest against the liberty we had taken, in beating their covers without first obtaining leave. Being myself a conservative, and a game-preserver, I respected their feelings; and instead of resenting their insults, I lifted my cap, and made them a polite bow, which the gentleman-like fellows appeared to consider a sufficient apology, and allowed us to proceed in peace.

"Dekho, Sahib,"* exclaimed our guide, uttering a grunt of

* 'Look, sir.'

satisfaction, and pointing to a well-marked footprint in the moist soil at the entrance of a small rocky ravine, which ran up some way into the side of a hill, "reench;"* and sure enough there was the unmistakeable 'spoor' of a huge bear.

"Hurra," cried Ellis, pulling the caps off his rifle, and replacing them with fresh ones, to prevent the possibility of missing fire, for our rifles had remained loaded since the previous day; "here's a glorious chance. The track is quite fresh. Old Bruin has passed here within the last half hour, and must have laid up in this ravine for the day. Come on, Old Stick-in-the-Mud; look sharp, and we shall have his skin in camp before the tents are pitched."

"Gently, youngster," said I; "don't be in such a desperate hurry. Finding a bear in this sort of ground is not so easy as you think, and killing him not so certain. So just sit down on this stump, light your pipe, and compose yourself a bit, while I examine the ground."

While Ellis sat puffing out volumes of smoke in a state of sulky resignation—for he evidently thought my preliminary arrangements a useless waste of time—the hunter and I carefully followed the track for some distance up the ravine, to ascertain what sort of ground we had to beat.

As we advanced, the ravine became narrower, the rocky sides more precipitous, and the overhanging brushwood so dense as almost to exclude the light of day. Under these circumstances, I did not consider it advisable to follow up the trail in a body, as the bear would hear our approach, and probably steal away unobserved; for it was impossible to see more than ten yards ahead. I therefore returned to where I had left Ellis, and, lighting my pipe, proceeded to explain to him my plan of operations. I directed Ellis and the native to

* 'Reench,' a bear.

proceed, one on each side of the ravine, keeping close along the edge, and about ten yards in advance of me, while I followed up the track of the bear along the bottom ; they were to examine the gorge as well as they could through the overhanging brushwood ; to let me know if they saw anything moving in my front ; and to keep a bright look-out that nothing broke cover on either side without their observing it ; while, in the event of my discovering anything, a whistle from me was the signal for them to halt, and await further orders. Having seen that my flankers were properly posted, I gave the signal to advance, and proceeded to follow up the track along the bottom of the ravine. For some distance the trail was well defined, and we proceeded at a tolerably rapid pace ; but as we advanced, the bottom of the gorge became rocky, the trail was indistinct, and I was obliged to proceed with great caution, picking out the track foot by foot, and peering into every crevice of the rocks where it was possible for a bear to find a hiding-place. Ellis and the native did their duty well, preserving their proper distance in advance, and keeping so good a look-out, that nothing could have moved without their observing it. I had proceeded in this manner about half-way up the ravine, when I was startled by a peculiar rustling sound among the bushes on my right. I immediately halted, and as I did so the sound ceased. Cocking both barrels of my rifle, I carefully scanned the side of the ravine from which the sound had proceeded. I could see nothing. The sound was unlike anything I had ever heard in the woods before—it was something between a rustle and a rattle, and fairly puzzled me. The place had a very tigerish look, and I did not half like it. Again the rustling was repeated, this time accompanied by a peculiar sound between a grunt and a growl ; but still I could see nothing.

I was standing on the top of a stone in the bed of the ravine, peering anxiously into the dark recess, feeling anything but plucky, and devoutly wishing myself well out of the place, but not daring to turn my back on the unknown beast, whatever it might be; when something bounced out in my face with a tremendous rush and clatter. In desperation, I fired both barrels; the animal, whatever it was—it appeared to my excited imagination fully as large as a leopard—rolled down the bank apparently dead, or mortally wounded; and I, recoiling backwards, slipped off the stone, and fell on my back among mud and loose stones, where I lay partially stunned.

"Hullo! what's up?" shouted Ellis.

"Don't know."

"What did you fire at?"

"Can't tell. It's a big-looking beast of some kind, and I believe I've killed it; but this place is so infernally dark, and it bolted out so quick, I could not see what it was. Come down, like a good fellow, and help me to get up, for I've almost broken my back across a stone."

Ellis and the native came to the rescue. I was picked up, not much the worse for my fall; and on searching for the formidable animal which had given me such a fright, we discovered a huge *porcupine* lying stone dead, with two bullets in his chest. You may depend upon it Ellis had a good laugh at my expense, and it was many a long day before I heard the last of my adventure with the porcupine.

The sun had by this time become oppressively hot, and Ellis, who began to feel rather faint for want of food, proposed that we should make straight for camp, and have some breakfast before proceeding further in our search for the bear. But as we were now near the head of the ravine, I persuaded him to hold on till we had examined it thoroughly,

as I expected to find some cave or crevice in which the bear had taken shelter, and where he would remain quiet during the heat of the day. In this expectation I was, however, disappointed. The trail led me direct through the ravine, which afforded no sufficiently secure resting-place for our friend Bruin, and from thence into thick underwood, where it appeared hopeless to follow him further; so, taking our bearings, we proceeded to make our way through the forest as directly as we could to the village near which our camp was to be pitched, the native marking the trees as he passed to enable him to find his way back to where we had killed the porcupine. We shot a couple of pea-fowl on our way home, and had nearly reached the edge of the forest when the guide spied a fine mass of honey-comb hanging from the branch of a tree, and begged of us to halt while he climbed up to get it. Our dusky friend had ascended about half-way up the tree, when a slight rustle among the branches above him attracted my attention, and on looking attentively I caught sight of a small patch of fur among the thick foliage near the top of the tree.

"What do you see?" asked Ellis, as I cocked the rifle and was about to raise it to my shoulder.

"The bear we have been following, if I mistake not; or one of his illustrious family, at all events. They are as fond of honey as our friend the native, and I suspect Bruin has been beforehand with him."

"Stand from under, you nigger!" shouted Ellis to the astonished native, who, seeing me pointing the rifle in his direction, and thinking probably that the bloodthirsty 'Feringee' intended taking a pot-shot at him, came scrambling down the tree like a monkey.

My first shot was answered by a sulky growl, and a few drops of blood pattering on the dry leaves at the foot of the

tree assured me the ball had taken effect, but the bear never moved.

"Make the son of a burnt father eat another bullet!" exclaimed the Hindoo, dipping his fingers in the blood and surveying them with a look of satisfaction.

The second barrel also took effect, and poor Bruin, finding his lofty position untenable, and probably thinking he would have a better chance for his life by showing fight, began slowly to descend from his perch, looking over his shoulder from time to time and grinning savagely.

Ellis now fired, and apparently hit the bear in a vital spot, for he clung convulsively to the stem of the tree as if hardly able to support himself. The second barrel was discharged, and the poor brute, relaxing his hold, dropped to the ground a lifeless mass of black fur and bear's grease.

"An inglorious victory, but a good bear-skin—so to breakfast." And the camp being now in sight, we were soon discussing a substantial breakfast, well pleased with the result of our morning's ramble through the forest.

"Ca' cannie, my man, ca' cannie; man's powers are limited, ye ken; sae eat slow, and ye can eat twice as much!!"

Such was Dr. Macphee's advice, as he sat at the door of the mess-tent, complacently puffing a cigar, after having devoured a hearty breakfast, and watched Ellis pitching into the good things provided by the mess-man with the wolfish appetite of a half-starved hunter. And not a bad piece of advice either to your hungry subaltern on a campaign, where the power of laying in two days' supply of provisions, at a sitting, is a talent which ought to be cultivated. Nay more, I am inclined to think that making a young gentleman eat three pounds of tough beef-steak for supper, and seeing him go through a course of two hours' drill next morning, without

exhibiting any alarming symptoms of indigestion, would prove as rational a mode of testing his capability to make a good useful officer, as some of the tests which are now applied in our military examinations.

After breakfast, we despatched the 'shikári' with a strong party of coolies to carry home the game. The bear was brought into camp in triumph, headed by a band of native musicians, beating drums and blowing horns. And Ellis and I spent the remainder of the day in flaying our victims and stretching their skins. The porcupine proved excellent eating; fat and tender like a sucking pig, but with a finer flavour.

During the remainder of our march, nothing particularly worthy of notice occurred, except the death of poor Morell of the Native Cavalry, who was killed by a fall from his horse, while riding after one of those infernal stray bullocks. On the 10th July we returned to Bangalore, and resumed the monotonous routine of a soldier's life in quarters.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN QUARTERS AT BANGALORE.

Bangalore, January 1st.—How time flies. This is the second New-year's Day I have spent in India; and it seems but yesterday that I was sitting over a bright fire, and gazing upon still brighter eyes in 'my ain countrie.' How these bright eyes do haunt a fellow!!

It is the fashion for people at home to abuse India; to call it 'a land of banishment'—'the grave of Europeans'—and all that sort of thing; and I have met with grave-looking, well-informed, and no doubt respectable elderly gentlemen, in this country, who assure me there is only a sheet of brown paper between us and the infernal regions. Lord help them! I wonder they are not afraid of 'putting their foot in it!' Others I have seen, who, after wandering over the greater part of India, have come back just as wise as they went. 'There was nothing in it.' They had seen nothing worth seeing—they had done nothing worth doing—it was a 'beastly country, inhabited by niggers'—and that they had barely been able to keep soul and body together, by smoking cheroots and drinking brandy and water.

With these gentlemen I must respectfully beg leave to differ.

That India is a land of banishment, may, to a certain extent, be admitted; inasmuch as we have some 12,000 miles of blue water rolling between us and merry England. That it may prove a grave to those lazy, indolent characters, who take no exercise, play billiards all night, sleep half the day, and in-

dulge in liberal potations of brandy and water, is more than probable; that the man who travels from Dan to Beersheba, with his eyes shut, may do so without seeing anything, is most true; that he who obstinately persists in gazing on the dark side of things, can never see them in their true light, is undeniable; and that those worthies who believe in our proximity to the infernal regions, must find it infernally hot, I have not the slightest doubt.

Tastes differ; but from the little experience I have had of this country, I am inclined to think that, taken as a land of banishment, it is by no means a bad one; that anyone who keeps up his spirits, takes plenty of exercise, and not too much brandy and water, may enjoy as good health as he does in England; that the 'Inferno' is farther off than some people are inclined to think; and that anyone with a moderate stock of enterprise and observation, a light heart and a good constitution, may see, hear, and do much to improve him both in mind and body.

Although I have been little more than a year in this country, and have acquired but a smattering of the language —for I am a very indifferent linguist—I have seen enough to satisfy me that the country and its inhabitants are most interesting, affording an ample field of study for the archæologist, as well as the naturalist; and to the sportsman, a 'happy hunting ground,' such as the departed soul of an American Indian might envy. I have ridden on an elephant—although I have not yet bagged one—slain a tiger, speared a boar, and shot almost every variety of game, from a bison to a snipe. I keep two good horses and a comfortable establishment of servants on my pay. I enjoy perfect health, eat my food with the appetite of a ploughboy, and sleep like a marine. I have therefore come to the conclusion, that a man had better

spend a few years of his life in this country, and see a little of the world, than waste his time still-hunting, bog-trotting, and whisky-drinking, in dull country quarters in Ireland—the inevitable fate of a soldier who is not sent on foreign service ;—and that the delight of returning to dear old England makes ample amends for a few years of banishment.

And so, a 'happy new-year' to you, mother dear ; and to you, my fair sister ; and to a certain blooming, bright-eyed cousin. God bless you all ! and may I soon have the supreme happiness of kissing you all round, cousin included. Don't blush, dear ! !

Since our return from Nugger, we have been going on in the usual jog-trot way ; mounting guard, drilling, paying morning visits, gossiping, and flirting with the fair dames and damsels who canter round the race-course, or congregate to listen to the band in the dusk of the evening : a very convenient time, by the way, for carrying on a flirtation. We have occasionally private theatricals ; and about once a month we get up a ball, in a handsome assembly-room, erected for the purpose.

At our last public ball, I created rather a sensation, and afforded subject for a full week's gossip, by carrying out the mad suggestion started by some of my wild brother subs, that I should ride my favourite horse, 'Turquoise,' into the ball-room. This horse, a high-caste Arab, although a hot-tempered fiery brute, had become so attached to me, that he would follow me like a dog, and obey my voice almost as a dog would.

Every morning, while I was at breakfast, he was turned out of the stable, and allowed to make his way to my bungalow,

where he quietly mounted the steps into the verandah, entered the room, and walked round the table, snorting and begging for bread, or fruit, or anything else on the board which suited his fancy. Having given him his portion, I desired him to return to his stable; an order which he instantly obeyed, trotting up to his groom, and submitting quietly to have his head and heel ropes replaced.

On the morning of the day when the last ball took place, Dr. Macphee and some other brother officers happened to be breakfasting with me, and 'Turquoise' paid us his usual morning visit. Macphee, who had not before seen the exhibition, was delighted.

"Eh! ye're a bonnie, and a wise beast," said the Doctor, as he stroked the animal's head, and presented him with a stalk of sugar-cane, which he had sent for on purpose. "I believe you could do anything, but preach and play the fiddle."

"Not quite that," replied I, laughing; "but I believe I could make him do anything that any other horse could do."

"I bet you fifty rupees," said Corfield, "you do not ride him into the ball-room to-night, and get him safe out again."

"Done!" said I. So the bet was made; and, accordingly, in the evening, I presented myself at the door of the ball-room, in 'full fig,' and mounted on 'Turquoise.'

The ball-room was a large building, to the verandah of which you ascended by a broad flight of steps; and from thence passed directly into the room, through a wide open doorway—the verandah being some ten or twelve feet above the level of the ground.

I walked 'Turquoise' quietly up to the steps, to let him see what was expected of him; then, retiring a few yards, I put him at it in a hand canter. Up he went, like a goat; halted a moment in the verandah, and then walked into the room—

as my old colour-sergeant remarked—"as bold as a play-hactor."

The blaze of light, the music, and the crowd, evidently astonished the horse, but did not frighten him. 'Turquoise' was not easily frightened. He was decidedly excited, however, and went prancing round the room; snorting, cocking his tail, and stepping very high, as if trying to dance. I could have got him out again quietly enough, were it not, that after the first silent stare of astonishment, occasioned by the unwonted apparition of a mounted horseman in a ball-room, the whole audience broke into a simultaneous cheer. The ladies waved their handkerchiefs, and the jolly subs, who ever delight in a bit of mischief, commenced yelling at the horse, and pelting him with their caps. This was too much for his temper. He became wild, rearing and plunging, and slipping on the waxed floor; threatening at every bound to charge among the ladies, who were rushing and screaming about the room, climbing upon the benches, and entrenching themselves in the recesses of the windows. At last I got the brute's head straight for the doorway, rammed in the spurs, and out he bolted, like a rabbit from his burrow—clearing the steps, I believe, at one bound—at all events, he landed me safe. And so I won my bet, without breaking my own neck, or injuring anyone else. But, as the Doctor remarked, "It was a daft-like trick;" and one I would not like to try again.

Journalising at Bangalore is rather up-hill work, there being nothing to record except local gossip, which would hardly prove interesting elsewhere. So, for want of something better, I shall give you an Indian story.

We had a pleasant dinner party at mess the other day, at which a clever, well-informed young civilian was present. As we sat smoking our cheroots in the verandah after dinner, the

conversation happened to turn upon the character and customs of the natives, and their extraordinary love for story-telling.

It was the custom, on Christmas-day, to give the troops a holiday, and a little treat; our men having an extra good dinner, with beef and plum-pudding, served out to them; and the native troops, I rather think, having a small sum given them to regale themselves withal.

I had remarked in how different a manner the two races of men had enjoyed their holiday; our men wandering about the country, getting drunk, and kicking up rows; while the more phlegmatic Hindoo invested his little bit of money in sweetmeats, and made himself supremely happy by squatting on his heels, under the shade of a tree, sucking lollypops, beating a 'tomtom,' and listening to stories, told either by his companions or by a professional story-teller.

"Yes," replied the young civilian; "a native's idea of perfect happiness is perfect idleness—having nothing to do but to suck sugar-plums and listen to stories; and you would be amused to hear the childish tales with which they are delighted, and to which they will listen for hours together, without wearying."

"Do let us have a specimen, if you can remember one."

"Well, if you care to hear it, I can tell you a rather absurd one which I overheard the other day, and which is a fair specimen of the childish trash with which the natives are amused. I think you will also recognise in one of the stories a well-known nursery tale, which, with slight variations, you must have read or listened to in your childhood; which I have read in German, and which I believe is common to every country in Europe; thereby tending to confirm my theory that most of our nursery stories and fairy tales are of Eastern origin."

"Thank you, old boy! Let's have the story, by all means."

"Well, light fresh cheroots, fill your glasses, and hold your tongues; and you shall have it."

The Story of the Three Brahmins.

"In the reign of Bajee Row Paishana, of Poonah, there dwelt in that city three Brahmins, whose names were Kisaram, Luckaram, and Ramsoop.

"These three Brahmins were walking together one day, when they met a soldier; who, as he passed, saluted them.

"'That was intended for me,' said Ramsoop.

"'Was it indeed?' sneered Luckaram.

"'Nonsense!' chimed in Kisaram; 'did you not mark his expression of awe, as his eye encountered my dignified look?'

"Thus they disputed; and, being unable to convince each other, they all ran back together; and all at once screamed to the soldier, 'Was it not I to whom you salaamed?'

"The soldier, highly amused, answered, 'I salaamed to the greatest fool among you,' and then went on his way.

"Each of the Brahmins was now anxious to prove himself the greatest fool. Contention ran high among them, and they reviled each other in choice native slang, which I dare not venture to translate literally.

"Luckaram scandalized and ridiculed the virtue of Ramsoop's great-great-great-grandmother; and Ramsoop retaliated by insinuating that the leg of the third wife of Luckaram's grandfather had been mistaken, by a pariah dog, for a post with a tuft of grass on the top of it, and had accordingly been made use of, by said pariah dog, as dogs are wont to make use of such convenient articles, and so been defiled.

"Kisaram, being a fat pursy little man, of a choleric temper, and an apoplectic tendency, had been taken with a choking fit, whenever he attempted to bluster forth his choice vocabulary of Brahminical slang. So, finding he had no chance in the argumemt, he proposed that the subject in dispute should be submitted to the Patell, and a jury of the sagest men, of a neighbouring village.

"This proposal was agreed to; and the three Brahmins adjourned to the Patell's house.

"The Patell and his colleagues listened gravely to the story of the rival fools; and gave judgment that each Brahmin should relate an anecdote of his life, illustrative of his claim to the enviable precedency of being considered the greatest fool; after which the court would award the palm.

"Kisaram—a fat punchy little man, with the perspiration exuding freely from his oily face—bounced up, and thus began:—

"'Twenty years ago, when ghee* was only two pice the seer,†—I was a young man then, and so poor that I could not afford to make myself fat, even at that price. On a fortunate day, a rich Sirdar made me a present of a new piece of cloth. I took it to the river, and having purified it, I hung it up between two posts to dry. While I sat watching it, an ill-omened pariah dog—may his grave be defiled—came that way, and walked under my clean cloth. Alas, alas! what a beautiful cloth to be thus defiled.

"'I was just about to throw it into the river, when I bethought me that the dog might have passed under the cloth without touching it; so I went down on all fours, and creep-

* 'Ghee,' clarified butter, a favourite food, or rather drink, of the Brahmins, much used for the purpose of making themselves *respectably* corpulent.

† 'Seer,' a native measure.

ing under the cloth, I found, to my great joy, that my back passed clear of it. Great was my relief; I had saved my cloth by my sagacity; so hereupon I sat down again to wait till it should be quite dry.

"'While I ruminated on the success of my lucky thought, my heart sank within me; for I remembered that the dog had a high curling tail; and although his back had cleared the cloth, it was more than probable that his ill-favoured tail had touched it.

"'Determined to preserve my purity, and not to wear my cloth till I had satisfied myself that it was undefiled, I once more stooped like a four-legged beast; and having fastened a piece of bamboo to my hindquarters, to represent the dog's tail, I again crept under the cloth. It was as I feared; my tail hitched against the cloth; it had certainly been defiled. So I threw it into the river, and went my way, chewing the bitter cud of disappointment.'

"Kisaram ceased, wiped his shining face, and sat down amidst murmurs of applause.

"Ramsoop rose to reply. He was a thin vegetable-diet-looking man, with a large face, receding forehead, light gray eyes—like pearl buttons drowned in gruel—and an idiotic expression that promised a rich treat to his auditors.

"'Know, my good friends, that last year I had a lovely cow. One day, thinks I to myself, why should not I take my cow to the fair, and sell her for a large price; bring home many changes of costly raiment, and a goodly store of sugar; and live happily for the rest of my days? So I rose very early next morning, before my wife was awake; and, loosing my cow, drove her to market. On the road, what should I meet but a man, carrying on his head a basket full of great round green things, for all the world like pumpkins.

"'What have you got there, brother?' says I.

"'Mare's eggs,' says he; 'and I'll tell you what, they're of the right breed, and will be hatched in two days. The foal will be worth untold gold—*when he is a horse.* My usual price is two hundred rupees per egg; but as you are a Brahmin, and a wise man, you shall have one of them in exchange for your cow.'

"'Now is my time to make a fortune!' thinks I; so, snatching up the largest of the great green eggs, I left my cow, and took a short cut home through the jungle; fearing lest the egg-merchant might repent his bargain, and follow me.

"'With my egg balanced on my head, I trotted homewards; thinking to myself how, when I arrived there, I should put my wife to bed, and make her hatch the egg; how, when the foal was hatched, I should fatten him on ghee; how I should stain his mane and tail a brilliant red; and what a price I should get for him in the market. These and many other things did I foresee, and in my wisdom provide for; when an unlucky root tripped my foot—I fell forward—the egg was dashed to the ground—it split in two, and rolled into a thick bush. I immediately thrust my hand into the bush, to search for the foal; when out he sprung—a beautiful, long-eared, brown little creature—and away like the wind.

"'I ran after him, entreating him to stop; but he was deaf to my cries; he was soon out of sight; and I never saw him again.

"'Now, what do you think?—when I got home, the people of the village tried to persuade me that the egg was a pumpkin, and the foal a hare! But I was not quite fool enough to believe that. My wife, when she heard my story, and how she was to have hatched the mare's egg, gave me a brave

knock on the pate with her spindle ; and my neighbours are constantly asking me whether I have found another mare's nest ; but, although I am a bit of a fool, I am not altogether an ass ; and I know very well the sepoy salaamed to me.'

" This tale evidently created a great sensation in court ; and Kisaram — the punchy little man who had previously spoken—burst out into a copious perspiration, as he observed the effect produced by the story of his rival.

" Last rose Luckaram, the third of the fools. He was a burly, bull-headed fellow, with a round forehead and great goggle eyes.

" Thus ran his tale.

" ' My brothers, Kisaram and Ramsoop, are pretty fools, in their way, no doubt. One throws away a good new cloth because he fancied a dog's tail might have brushed against it ; and the other exchanges a beautiful cow for a green pumpkin. But what are they to me? I gave away my wife—my virgin bride—ha! ha!—and for nothing, too!—ha! ha! ha!

" ' Luxmee was such a pretty girl, with eyes like an antelope. We had been betrothed since our childhood ; and when she arrived at the age of thirteen, I was sent for, that the marriage might be celebrated, and a day was appointed for the ceremony.

" ' Now, thinks I, what a good joke it will be if I carry off Luxmee the day before, and make her walk home with me—the distance to my village being only twenty miles.

" ' Well, I told her to follow me ; she came after me like a pet lamb ; and away we went together. After we had gone about six miles, Luxmee, who had never in her life walked further than from her own door to the well, began to tire ; before we had gone another mile, she sat down to cry ; and after another mile, she lay down to die.

"'Now, what could I do? As good luck would have it, a slave-merchant passed that way; and being struck by Luxmee's extreme beauty, he stopped and questioned me.

"'I told him my story. He looked sternly in my face, and said, 'O Brahmin, you have behaved foolishly. Give me the maid, and I will cherish her in my bosom, and relieve you of your care.'

"'This seemed to me kind on the part of the merchant; so I placed Luxmee on one of his camels, bade her farewell, and returned home.

"'When I arrived, and mentioned my good fortune in having met with so generous a stranger; and how he had kindly taken Luxmee, and promised to cherish her, my mother-in-law beat her breast and tore her hair—my mother spat in my face—my father cuffed me—my father-in-law kicked me—and all the women in the village vied with each other in casting dirt upon my head. This is all I have to say. Now who is the greatest fool of the three?'

"The verdict was unanimous in favour of the last speaker, Luckaram; and he departed with pride in his port, and triumph in his eye; envied by his brother fools, and laughed at by the rest of the world."

"Very good stories," said the Doctor, "and ane o' them an auld friend o' mine. I hae heard the story o' the mear's egg, told in broad Scotch, forty years ago!"

"And so have I in German!" exclaimed another of the party.

"And so you might have heard it in almost any other European language," replied the young civilian. "All evidence in favour of my theory, that most of our nursery and fairy tales are of Eastern origin."

In the course of the evening my adventure of riding into the ball-room happened to turn up; and this led to a dissertation on the sagacity of animals, and what they might be trained to do, by judicious management.

A young gentleman of the party, who prided himself on his peculiar gift of being able to tame any wild animal, and was rather suspected of drawing a long bow occasionally, held forth at great length on his wonderful skill in this respect. He had reared young bears and tigers, and made them as familiar as dogs; he had tamed wolves and jackals, and had a tame boa-constrictor, which slept coiled up at the foot of his bed to keep his feet cool. As he warmed on his subject his stories became more and more marvellous, till that canny old Scot, Dr. Macphee, could 'thole' it no longer.

Giving me a knowing wink, he turned to the speaker with a look of assumed gravity that was irresistible—

"'Deed, sir, I can weel believe that. 'Odsake, man, wi' patience and perseverance, you may tame onything. My grannie, honest woman—she's deed and gane noo—had an auld cock saumon, was that tame he just gaed *pickin' aboot amang the hens!!*"

This was a clincher. The idea of an old male salmon, with his hooked beak, flapping about among the poultry was overwhelming. The tamer of wild beasts collapsed. We burst into a roar of laughter; and the Doctor, wishing us good-night, walked off to visit his patients, without altering a muscle of his countenance.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOG-HUNTING.

HOG-HUNTING, now vulgarly called 'pig-sticking,' is, or at least used to be—in my opinion—the most exciting sport in India. But I fear the sport must have deteriorated; or the taste for it diminished; or that the young gentlemen of the present day have taken to spearing village pigs, instead of wild boars—I have seen the thing done before now—in which case they are quite right in calling it 'pig-sticking.' Otherwise, I cannot conceive any good horseman, who has ever struggled for and taken the first spear in a well-contested field, applying the snobbish, butcher-like term, 'pig-sticking,' to this noble sport.

At the time of which I write, the 'Nugger hunt' was in its glory. It was a grand annual meeting, to which the best riders and sportsmen in the west of India resorted, from Kandeish, the Deccan, and other hunting countries; the meeting being a sort of tournament, at which challenges were given and accepted by rival horsemen; and where the honour of taking the first spear was well and gallantly contested.

The great object in hog-hunting is not 'sticking your pig' like a butcher, but riding for and winning contested spears.

A true sportsman feels comparatively little pleasure in killing the finest boar, without a worthy antagonist, with whom to contest the first spear. From the influence of this feeling, the field becomes an arena, in which honour may be gained,

as in the days of chivalry; and the spirit with which men struggle for victory creates a degree of excitement unknown in any other sport.

The slightest touch of the spear-point—if it draws blood—constitutes a fair spear; and he who first shows crimson on his blade is entitled to claim 'first spear' and the hog; although he—the hog—may show fight for half an hour afterwards.

Even he who goes in and gives the death-blow to a furious boar at bay claims comparatively little honour. This belongs exclusively to him who first draws blood. Hence the feeling which makes men ride with a desperation unknown even in the hardest struggle for the lead with hounds.

True, the fences of Leicester, or Northamptonshire, are not met with in India; but deep ravines, to which the Wissendine is a ditch; dried-up water-courses, with undermined banks, which render falls inevitable; steep rocky descents, which in cold blood appear impracticable to any animal but a goat; holes and cracks wide enough and deep enough to receive a horse up to the girths; and last, not least, 'cockspur thorns'—three inches long—which absolutely nail a man's feet to his boots, and make his horse's chest and forelegs look like a pincushion, are difficulties, I think, sufficient to redeem hog-hunting—in the west of India at least—from the character of easy riding.*

As for the pace, there is but one; the very best your horse can muster, be the ground what it may. There is no holding, no craning; all cramming, from first to last. A lanky, outlying boar, can beat a good horse in a spurt of half a mile over the best ground. What then must such an animal do over a

* I am here describing the style of hunting in the stony hilly country of the Deccan—the only hog-hunting ground with which I am acquainted. In Bengal, I believe, the country is less difficult.

country covered with loose stones, and cut up by ravines? Be as quick as you will, still he must gain something at every in-and-out jump; for, horses' forelegs not being made of iron, you cannot take a drop of six or seven feet—alighting on sheet-rock—at racing speed; you must pull your horse together, or smash him. Unless you stick close enough to your hog, to watch how he turns, in descending dips he will dodge like a rabbit; and, if you once lose sight of him, the chances are you never see him again. There is nothing for it but to go your best, and trust in providence; forgetting for the time your own neck, as well as your horse's legs.

A hog usually selects the very worst ground he can find. And an old boar is one of the most cunning animals in existence, for practising tricks to throw out his pursuer.

When you have succeeded in getting within spear-length of your game, there is no time for manœuvring. An adversary is at your haunches, striving to wrest from you the spear of honour; and one miss is fatal, in a near thing against a man worth beating. If it be kept in mind that a hog—before he is blown—can turn almost as quick as a hare, the difficulty of taking 'first spear,' when well opposed, may be imagined. Mere hard riding will not do. You must know how to handle your spear, as well as your horse; and mounted on a stiff-necked, hard-mouthed brute—be his speed what it may—you have not the ghost of a chance against the man who rides a well-trained hunter, even though he be a slower horse. A perfect hunter will twist himself about, by the pressure of the leg, or motion of the body, without assistance from the reins; and some horses become so fond of the sport, as to stick to a hog like a greyhound coursing a hare; keeping a bright look-out, at the same time, to wheel off and avoid a charge when necessary.

If a boar is reached before he becomes blown, he turns with great rapidity the moment the leading horse is within a few paces of him ; thus throwing him out, and making him lose ground, even should he be well in hand and turn readily. The second man, now prepared to make his rush, frequently takes the spear. But it sometimes happens that half a dozen riders are thus baulked in succession by a speedy hog, before the contest ends. By this time, being usually too much blown to run further, he stands at bay, and charges everyone who approaches. It is at this period of the chase, that, without good management, horses are apt to get ripped.

Going slowly at a boar is very dangerous ; for not only may a miss occasion an accident, but even if you spear him through, he can run up the shaft, and rip the horse's entrails out, before he has time to turn. But with a steady, bold horse, you have no right to expose him to any serious danger. Go at the boar at a smart gallop, and as he meets you, strike straight down, while he is under your right stirrup, and whether you kill him dead or not, your speed—if your horse is well in hand—will always save you, by wheeling off at the moment the spear is delivered.

From this it will be seen that something more is required in the man, than merely riding well across country ; and that other qualifications besides speed and bottom are necessary for an Indian hunter.

Good nerve, a quick eye, and a light hand, are requisite to make a horseman ; but something more is required to make a hog-hunter : he must also be able to use a spear dexterously, and be up to all the dodges and manœuvres of the cunning animal he pursues.

The first essential of a horse is blood, without which you need not expect to find either the courage or endurance

necessary to make a good hunter ; the next is temper, for a hot violent horse will seldom turn readily, and to distinguish himself in the field, sharp turning is indispensable. All horses will not face a boar, and some old hunters even, who have been badly ripped, become so timid that no power can force them up to a large hog. From this cause, the purchase of a young horse, likely to make a hunter, becomes a lottery, and proved good ones always command a large price. I have known as much as £500 to be given for a first-rate hunter.

The favourite covers for hog are fields of sugar-cane, green jowara, bauble-jungles, date-groves, and ravines upon the sides of mountains. Those which feed upon sugar-cane become too fat to run far, but the boars are extremely savage, and generally charge as soon as they are blown; while some refuse to run at all, standing at bay the moment they are driven into the plain. The best hog for wind and bottom are those found on the hills. They are kept in good racing condition by the distance they have to travel in search of food, and although hardly so pugnacious as their fat brethren of the plain, they afford more sport than any others.

As an illustration of this, here is a description—written at the time—of my first day with the Nugger hunt.

A field-officer's tent—in front of which floated a banner, displaying, on a field of red, a black boar—was pitched on a barren plain, near the dark date-groves bordering the village of Hoolgoor. Under a grove of mango trees, in the rear, were seated round their cooking-fires groups of natives in every variety of costume. A noble elephant, kneeling by them to have his howdah removed, fanned himself with a branch, and blew from his trunk clouds of dust, as if to relieve himself after a long and sultry march ; whilst a troop of baggage camels, just relieved from their loads, kept up a perpetual

tinkling of bells, as they stretched their long necks to crop the leaves overhead.

Before each of the smaller tents, ranged on either side, were picketed groups of baggage ponies and hack horses, which neighed cheerily, as a string of high-caste Arab horses, in mud-stained clothing, were led past. Almost all these horses—although in splendid condition, with skins like satin—showed unmistakeable symptoms of hard work. Their battered fore-legs proved that they had not been *cantered* over the stony plains and rocky hills of the Deccan; and many of them were disfigured by scars, which might have been mistaken for sabre-cuts, were it not that a hog-spear in the hand of each horsekeeper indicated the field in which these honourable wounds had been received. Ever and anon, a sun-burnt horseman, dressed in the uniform of one of the hunt clubs, which flourished throughout the Bombay Presidency, galloped up to the mess tent, where he was received with a hearty cheer of welcome, as he threw himself from his smoking hack.

It was the great annual meeting of the Nugger hunt.

Kandeish had sent her hardest riding men to meet the pride of the Deccan; and twenty well-tried horsemen met that evening to dine together, previous to the grand struggle of the morrow.

Old Duttoo, the hunt shikári, reported that the grove was swarming with hog; two hundred beaters were ready to take the field; and everything that could tend to promote sport had been arranged by the secretary of the club.

Never was assembled a happier set of fellows, than those who sat that evening round the old teak mess-table. Tales of famous runs, recollections of past meetings, and prophecies as to the present, were the all-engrossing subjects. "The boar!

the mighty boar!" was toasted in bumpers of burgundy and claret; and hunting songs were sung, of which the following stanza is a tolerable specimen. Not the best of poetry, you will say. But not so bad, considering that the author was a young subaltern of a light dragoon regiment; and the chorus was stunning!

HUNTING SONG.

"The boar, the mighty boar's my theme,
Whate'er the wise may say;
My morning thought, my midnight dream,
My hope throughout the day.

"Youth's daring spirit, manhood's fire,
Firm hand, and eagle eye,
Do they require, who dare aspire
To see the wild-boar die.

"Then pledge the boar, the mighty boar,
Fill high the cup with me;
Here's luck to all who fear no fall
And the next gray boar to see"—

and so on, through a dozen verses. But this specimen will probably be thought sufficient.

At ten o'clock next morning the bugle sounded to saddle; and each man, mounting his best horse, walked him to the date-grove.

The beaters, armed with matchlocks, rattles, drums, trumpets, and other noisy instruments for rousing the game, were put into line. Men with small red and white flags, to signal in what direction the hog might break, were posted on the neighbouring heights, and the beat began.

The party drew up in a retired spot, waiting, with breathless anxiety, for a break. Every heart beat with a violence almost painful; and the old Arab hunters cocked their ears,

and trembled with eagerness under their riders, as the cry arose of game on foot; and the crash of a large animal bursting through the date trees became each moment more distinct.

In another moment, a flag telegraphed that he had broken cover, and several others rose in quick succession, pointing out his line.

"There he goes!—a welting boar, with his gray snout set for the hills! For heaven's sake, gentlemen, hold hard, and let him get well away, or he'll break back yet! Now, then, he's safe! Ride!!!"

So shouted the master of the hunt; and at the word 'ride,' away thundered the whole field, each man urging his horse at once to the top of his speed.

Richardson, on his favourite horse 'Recorder,' took the lead, closely followed by those well-known horses, 'Chancellor' and 'Holy Billy.'

The boar, who had been going leisurely along, stops and turns round. It is now too late to double back; and, uttering a savage grunt, he lays out at a pace which for a time gains on his pursuers. His pace begins to abate, and they are rapidly closing with him, just as he reaches the bank of a deep dry water-course. He clears it like an antelope. The two leading horses take it in their stride; three others, unable either to turn or pull up, charge it at an impracticable place, jump short, and go in with an awful smash. The others, mounted on more manageable steeds, do it, 'in and out;' but, by the time they get across, have lost so much time that their chance is hopeless.

The race is now between the two leading horses, 'Recorder' and 'Holy Billy.' The crisis is at hand. The boar is getting blown, and turns half round to meet the leading horse, who, with bloody flanks and expanded nostrils, is gain-

ing upon him at every stride. It is 'Holy Billy,' who went ahead, after crossing the ravine, in consequence of 'Recorder' having made a stumble which nearly brought him to his knees. His rider drives the rowels to the head, and shoves up his horse. The spear quivers within an inch of its mark. "He must have it now." No! the boar makes a short turn to the left, nearly tripping up the horse. 'Recorder,' close at his haunches, is let go; and, as the boar crosses, in goes the blade. It disappears, and is withdrawn in an instant. "Blood!"—the spear is won.

But now begins the fight.

The boar missed a rip, which he attempted when first he felt the steel, and is now trotting sulkily in front, champing his tusks. Another spear has been driven into him by Richardson, as he passed him at full speed. "Now look out!"

The boar stops, and stands at bay with his back to a bush. He cocks his ears, erects his bristles, fixes his little fierce gray eye on the object of his attack, and dashes at him with tremendous force. The spear receives the shock, passes clean through his body, and is shivered to pieces; but it has not stopped him, for a deep gash in the horse's flank shows that the ripping tusk has been sent home, in that lightning charge.

The boar staggers forward, with the splintered spear-shaft sticking upright in his back, then turns to attack 'Chancellor,' who is coming up at a canter, well in hand, and ready to receive him; he rushes on till under the right stirrup of the rider, and is about to make a rip at the horse's flank, when 'Chancellor'—an old hand at the work—wheels sharp to the left; and, at the same moment, his rider drives the spear straight down between the boar's shoulders: he reels at the blow; a stream of blood and foam gushes from his mouth;

he staggers forward another yard—still towards his foe—and drops dead.

There were tails shaking, and flanks heaving, at the end of this run; for the severity of the pace had told, although the distance ridden had been short. While some dismounted, turning their horses' heads to the wind, and slackening their girths, a distant flag was seen to rise, fluttering in the breeze.

Girths were again tightened; and all, mounting in hot haste, galloped towards the signal. "There they are in front. Ride!"

The gray backs of a large sounder of hog, making strong running for a distant cover, were seen topping a rising ground about half a mile ahead. Away again at racing speed; each man pressing his horse, and driving home the spurs at every stride to gain another yard. The sounder scattered in all directions, as the whole field came thundering after them. Twenty hog, at least, were bounding over the stones. None of them being very large, the party divided into pairs, and each pair, selecting a victim, laid into him.

The plain now resembled the scene of a tilting match, or a Turkish Meidan, where the turbaned Mussulmans, throwing aside their habitual gravity, madly urge their high-trained barbs, in the mimic war of the flying jereed.

Here are two riders, running in circles, so intent on their game as hardly to observe another pair cross and recross their path at speed, pressing their gallant Arabs, as if for life and death. There, in one corner, a vicious old sow springs in her charge right upon a horse's back; and as she drops, is speared through by the man coming up behind. In another stands a bristly boar at bay, fighting till he falls covered with wounds. Men without caps, and the tattered fragments of

what once were coats fluttering behind them, are tearing like maniacs across the plain, hoping still to overtake a flying hog, now dwindled to a speck on the horizon. The barren waste was soon covered with the dying and the dead; and seventeen hog fell in this one melée, before the miserable remnant reached their cover. Some men had taken three spears off one horse; and all had at least blooded their steel.

The party returned slowly to the grove, and were changing horses, when two men were seen, spurring their jaded horses towards them, in close pursuit of a boar of unusual size, whose foam-covered tusks and faltering action shewed that he was blown and nearly exhausted; but the sight of his cover in front appeared to inspire him with fresh courage, and he exerted the last remnants of his strength to reach it. As they approached, all in a smoke, the 'Poonah Bruiser' on his famous horse 'Allegro,' and 'Old Blowhard'* on 'The Doctor'—an equally well-known hunter—were recognised as the riders.

The struggle between these two noted hard-goers was watched with intense interest. They closed rapidly with the boar, now not more than a length ahead, and too much blown either to turn or fight; his only chance was to gain the cover, and to do this he strained every nerve. The goring rowels were driven into the horses' panting flanks unheeded. So nearly were the two horses matched that the men rode knee to knee, lengthening their slender spears, till they quivered over the haunches of the boar.

'The Doctor's' head was pushed in front—one foot more would have given him the spear. "Go it, old Blowhard! go

* Our slang names for two of the best horsemen in the hunt; but whose real names I do not, at this distance of time, remember.

in and win!" No; again his nose fell back to a level with his antagonist. It was the last effort of an honest horse, game to the backbone, and he could do no more.

They were within twenty yards of the cover. Now or never!

"Go it, Bruiser! Five to one on the boar!"

'The Bruiser'—mad with excitement—drove in the spurs, and lifting his fainting horse, threw him, as it were, a yard forward. It was enough. His blade disappeared in the boar's back, turning him over with the shock; and before he could rise, a fatal thrust from 'Old Blowhard' had reached his heart—"Who-whoop!!"

He fell within five yards of the grove which would have saved him had he reached it.

This was the most exciting match of the day, and so near a thing that the victor could hardly triumph at his success, or his antagonist feel mortified by defeat.

We learnt afterwards that these two had separated from the others in chase of a hog, making for the hills; and, on their return, had fallen in with this old boar (who, as old boars will do, had remained behind in the cover) stealing along a nullah, in hopes of making his escape unobserved. He attempted to head back to the shelter he had just left; but his retreat being cut off, he was obliged to take to the open, and the result was the severe run I have attempted to describe.

Fresh horses having been mounted, the beat recommenced. A long time elapsed before another break was effected. The hog had become suspicious of danger in the open—as well they might—and although forced nearly to the end of the grove, upwards of a mile in length, they broke back through the line of beaters, with an obstinacy not to be resisted;

overturning, in their headlong course, the people who vainly attempted to stop them.

It was near sunset, when a large sow at length broke cover, going away, with a long start, across a line of country admirably adapted for shewing the difference between a hunter and a park hack. If she had wished to try the speed and bottom of the troop of impatient little Arabs which stood pricking their ears at every rustle, and trembling with anxiety for the start, she could not have chosen a better line. It was intersected by water-courses, and cut up by deep ruts, over which a horse could not stretch himself in his gallop without support; just the sort of ground where a short-legged hunter, quick at his leaps, and carrying a man who could pull him together at the proper moment, would run away from many able to give him a stone on a race-course.

The whole field got away at once, retaining their relative position without much variation till the first jump, a difficult in-and-out, at a dry water-course, with a drop of about seven feet. The leading man threw himself back, taking a strong pull at his horse's head, and got well across, after one desperate stagger, on landing in the soft sand at the bottom of the nullah. The second, mounted on a headstrong brute, holding a severe curb-bit tight in his teeth, went at it at speed, as if he meant to clear both banks, and came down with an awful crash that took all the fight out of him.

Every one scrambled across, somehow or other, wild to overtake the game little trump who led them, carrying as fine a horseman as ever sat on pig-skin. Among the foremost of his antagonists was the notorious tiger-slayer from Kandeish, riding a hot-tempered violent bay, fresh from the Arab horse-dealer, carrying his tail erect like a flagstaff,

throwing up his nose, and snapping at the cheek of the bit, like a young one whose mouth had never been pinched by the curb before. I should have called him running away with any other man; but what horse ever went fast enough for Onslow?

The sow was one of those lanky speedy devils that will go straight for miles, without showing symptoms of distress. She had already led them three miles; and was still going strong, making for a thickly-wooded ravine, with that last burst of speed which a hog—let it be ever so distressed—always exerts for the last run into cover. The little trump was still leading; his square racing dock twisted in a curl over his back, and his silvery sides black with sweat, and painted, behind the girths, with splashes of crimson. The cockey bay, too violent to last, had given place to a fine slashing gray horse, tearing along, with his head in the air; snorting and tossing flakes of foam in his rider's face. He came up, hand over hand, threatening to dispute the spear; as the man in front was lengthening his shaft for a long thrust. The gray was at his haunches; he crept up till his nose was at his knee; in went the spurs; he sprung forward like a buck, and came slap against the hog, at the very moment she swerved to the right, but too late to avoid his adversary's blade, now withdrawn, dimmed with blood.—"First spear."

The horse's legs flew from under him, and over he went, turning a complete somersault, while his rider's spear, driven through the sow's body, pinned her to the ground. No harm was done, although the crash seemed awful, and the gallant old sow received her death-blow, as she stood tottering over the fallen hunter.

Of my own share in this day's sport the less said the

better. I was, at the time, a regular 'muff,' mounted on a young, hot-tempered horse, as green as myself, which ran away with me from the start. I got two severe falls; broke a couple of spears; narrowly escaped having my horse ripped; and, after all, never drew blood! But although I did not succeed in blooding my maiden spear, I was thoroughly well blooded myself, by having a handful of clotted gore, from the first victim, dashed in my face, by way of baptism.

And so ended my first day with the Nugger hunt.

CHAPTER XIX.

EXCURSION TO THE NEILGHERRY HILLS.*

Bangalore, September.—I and three brother officers have got three months' leave of absence to go on a hunting expedition to the Neilgherry Hills, and have arranged to start to-morrow.

Native servants have a great dread of the cold climate of the hills ; many of them refuse to go on any terms. "Hills bad country," they say ; "suppose Hindoo man go to Hills, that time fever and ague come catch. Bad business ; not can go with Sahib." Those who do consent to accompany you must of course be provided with a good warm suit of English cloth, and invariably insist on an increase of wages.

Mems. for the benefit of travellers to the Neilgherry Hills—

Nothing quite so intolerable as the whims and caprices of natives when about to be clothed in woollen garments.

Each servant, after being coaxed and wheedled with additional wages, and no end of 'soft solder' to induce him to migrate, must be suitably clothed at his master's expense ; for his poor sun-dried carcass would shiver to death, under his thin cotton robes, if he were transplanted without a warm fleece. This may seem an easy matter to those who have not attempted it ; but I can assure them it is no such thing. Here is an instance.

Enter 'Bootrel Sahib'—Anglice, the butler—an ancient Parsee.

* Probably Nilagiri, from *nila*, blue, and *giri*, a mountain.

"Sahib, Nagloo the humal say, how he can wear blue cloth coat, unless he have red binding to look proper?"

"Very good, let him have red binding. Anything for peace' sake."

"But then he say cloth too coarse; very hard for skin."

"Tell him to go to the devil."

"Very good, Sahib."

Now this fellow, with a hide like a buffalo, had never worn anything softer than a rough native blanket, in which the most conscientious anchorite might well have performed his haircloth penance; and yet the knave must needs turn up his nose at good English broadcloth.

Another varlet, whose legs might have been used to clean a flute, looked with scorn on his shining garments, because, forsooth, the tailor had failed—as well he might—in an attempt at a tight fit. Then one fellow fancied a hanging sleeve, while another must have his puckered. Estoo, the horsekeeper, liked his waist as high as his armpits; and fancying that he had calves to his legs, gave no end of trouble about the cut of his trousers. Confound them all! After ten days' trouble and annoyance, their rapacity as to wages and taste as to dress have at last been satisfied, and we are ready to start.

13*th Sept.*—Started from Bangalore on our way to the Neilgherry Hills.

Our party consists of Mrs. Reed (the Colonel's wife), who has been recommended to visit the hills for the benefit of her health; Captain Short, Dr. Macphee, Lewis, and myself. We travel on horseback, and Mrs. Reed in a palanquin, carried by her own set of bearers. As there are public bungalows at every stage, we do not require tents; so travel in what may be called light marching order. Thus we proceeded by

easy stages, and without any adventure worthy of note, to Seringapatam; where we took up our quarters in the 'Laul Baug,' formerly one of Tippoo's palaces, but now used as a travellers' bungalow; and here we halted for a day to inspect the place.

The 'Laul Baug' has evidently been at one time an elegant summer palace, surrounded by beautiful gardens; and although much dilapidated, is still a fine specimen of Oriental architecture. The rooms are large and airy, opening into verandahs and balconies looking upon the gardens. The painting and gilding of the walls and ceilings—which are elaborately carved—is still in good preservation, and the brilliant combination of colours has a gay and cheerful effect.

The outer pillars which support the verandahs also bear traces of painting and gilding, but are, of course, sadly defaced by the action of the weather. What interested me most, was a fresco painting, by a native artist, which covered the whole wall at one end of the house.

The subject of this painting is supposed to be a faithful representation of one of Tippoo Sahib's victories over the British troops. Like all native drawings, it exhibits a glorious contempt for anything like perspective or proportion; but what it lacks in correct drawing is amply made amends for by variety and brilliancy of colouring. Pink elephants, yellow men, and sky-blue horses with yellow feet and scarlet tails, are jumbled together in glorious confusion. The British are, of course, flying in terror, pursued by native horsemen; and being trampled to death under the feet of victorious elephants. Amongst the fugitives, the artist has not forgotten to introduce a group of native servants; and, by a stroke of high art, distinguishes them from the crowd of camp-followers and other natives, by representing each man with an immense tea-

kettle in one hand, and a gigantic brandy-bottle in the other —two indispensable articles, without which natives believe that no European can take the field, or indeed move a mile from home. And perhaps they are not so far wrong.

The old man who takes charge of the bungalow—a fine tall soldier-like fellow, with snow-white hair and beard, and who was formerly in Tippoo's service—took great pains to point out and explain to us the varied beauties of this splendid battle-piece, which was evidently the light of his eyes and the joy of his heart. He particularly called our attention to the principal figure in the picture, which he assured us was a striking likeness of his late revered master, and which was, of course, three times as large as any other. The face of the victorious Tippoo was bright yellow, and he bestrode a scarlet elephant with golden feet and silver tusks!! The poor old fellow was ready to weep with joy at the admiration we expressed for this magnificent work of art.

The palace is surrounded by what has been an ornamental garden. Although now much neglected, it is still well stocked with orange, lime, citron, pomegranate, and mango trees, besides a variety of flowers and flowering shrubs; it is intersected by canals terminating in large marble baths, one of which occurs opposite each suite of apartments; and our venerable guide assured us that one of Tippoo's favourite amusements was to sit in the verandah, behind a lattice, and watch the ladies of his harem as they bathed here. A truly Oriental idea.

After breakfast we went to visit the tomb of Tippoo and his family, which is situated about two miles from the fort. The approach to the mausoleum is through a large garden, with a handsome entrance-gate, from whence a triple row of cypress trees leads to the tomb.

The tomb itself is a large handsome building in the Moorish style, supported on pillars of black marble, and terminating in a dome-shaped roof of chunam or white marble, surmounted by a sort of minaret, all elaborately carved and richly gilded. The interior, which occupies the whole space of the building, is painted in a pattern of different shades of brown—apparently in imitation of cut velvet—and harmonises well with the solemn air of the place.

No daylight is admitted. In fact there is no aperture by which it could be admitted, except the low Moorish arched doorway by which we entered. The vault is lighted by a profusion of gold and silver lamps fed with perfumed oil, which renders the air unpleasantly faint and oppressive; these lamps are kept burning night and day, and are tended by priests appointed for the purpose. On one side of the vault a vase of incense was burning, and in the centre three tombs were raised; one containing the remains of Tippoo, another those of his father Hyder Ally, and the third those of his mother. Each tomb was covered by a pall of rich satin embroidered with gold; and over all was erected a canopy of crimson cloth, with a deep fringe of gold; and an ostrich's egg was suspended over each tomb, and from each corner of the canopy.

There was something strikingly grand and solemn in the whole thing. But as ladies in such cases are generally supposed to feel more, and express their feelings better, than we male animals can; I have, with Mrs. Reed's permission, and for the benefit of my lady readers, borrowed the following extract from her journal.

"The dim light, the peculiar smell of the incense, and the funereal colour of the interior, produced an impression of awe that was not easily shaken off. And even when we emerged

from the tomb, the scene was one which—to my feelings at least—tended rather to increase than to diminish this solemn feeling. The garden around was filled with a profusion of flowers, and between the black pillars of the colonnade they were growing in vases. The profound stillness which reigned around the consecrated place—the air absolutely laden with the perfume of tuberose, jessamine, and the lovely Persian rose—the sombre aspect of the cypress trees contrasting with the various gaudy colours of the surrounding flowers—the magnificent carved and ornamental mosque near the tomb—in short, all that was beautiful in nature and art had been brought together to decorate the last resting-place of mortality; of what had already returned to the dust, from whence it was taken. What a lesson does it give us on our littleness and vanity!"

After lunch we proceeded to Mysore—ten miles—and took up our quarters in the travellers' bungalow. Although we were all pretty well tired with our day's march, the mosquitoes, which are here the largest I have ever seen, and bloodthirsty exceedingly, tormented us to such an extent that no one could sleep; so one by one we appeared in the verandah, in our dressing-gowns, and spent the remainder of the night walking about with cheroots in our mouths, admiring a display of fireworks which were being let off in the town on the occasion of some native feast.

As soon as it was daylight I dressed, and started off, by way of a small walk before breakfast, to inspect a rocky hill at the back of the fort, which in the clear morning air appeared close at hand; but this apparent proximity I soon discovered was occasioned by its great height and the excessive clearness of the atmosphere. It took me a full hour's sharp walking to reach the base of the hill, and nearly another

hour to ascend by a zigzag path to the summit; but I persevered, and was rewarded for my trouble by the splendid view I obtained, and the delicious change of climate I experienced. The air was I know not how many degrees cooler than on the plain below, but to me it appeared positively cold. Here I found a comfortable English-looking country house, built by Mr. Cole (the late resident) as a retreat during the hot season. There was nothing remarkable about it except that it was fitted up with fireplaces, which gave it a very homely and un-Indian look; and that hanging in the entrance-hall I discovered the most splendid specimen of a sambar's head I have ever seen. It was hung so high that I had no means of taking the dimensions; but I managed to get the girth of the horn, which was eighteen inches round the burr, and large in proportion. I have seen many large heads, but never one at all to compare to this.

Having seen all that was to be seen, I set off down the hill at a round trot, and got back in time for a late breakfast—very hot, rather tired, and with blistered feet.

Dressed and proceeded, after breakfast, to the country house of Mr. Cassmajor, the resident of Mysore, who, hearing of our arrival, had kindly sent his carriage with a polite message inviting us to visit him.

We found Mr. Cassmajor a most gentlemanlike agreeable man, and spent two very pleasant days under his hospitable roof. On leaving him he kindly proposed that we should halt for a day at Nungengode, about ten miles on our road, where he has a hunting-lodge and game-preserve, and take a day's shooting; a most generous offer, of which we were delighted to avail ourselves.

At Nungengode we found a handsome private bungalow, with every comfort, provided for us: and close to it the game-

preserve. This is a considerable tract of country, from two to three miles square, covered with low brushwood and long grass—which affords admirable cover for game—and enclosed by a high wall. The ground is plentifully stocked with antelope, wild hog, a few spotted-deer, and a variety of small game, such as hares, partridge, quail, etc. We found the large game exceedingly shy, and difficult to stalk; but managed to bag a few antelope and a wild boar; and saw a leopard, which stole away out of shot; he was probably a poacher, which had effected an entrance by climbing over the wall.

Two days' march from hence brought us to Mungalum, a bungalow on the edge of the heavy forest-jungle which surrounds the base of the Neilgherry Hills. Here we halted for the night, and did not start next morning till two hours after sunrise. This precaution is rendered necessary by the exceedingly unhealthy nature of the jungle, to traverse which before sunrise, or after nightfall, is almost certain fever, and probable death. The number of tigers, wild elephants, and other beasts by which it is infested, also render travelling by night dangerous; and nothing can induce native bearers to make the attempt. After a very hot and rapid march of twenty-two miles, without a halt, we reached the little bungalow at the foot of the Goodaloor Pass, without encountering any of the denizens of the forest, except a pack of wild dogs, at which I took a long rifle-shot and missed. We saw the tracks of five different tigers, which had recently crossed the road, and of two elephants, one of which, from the freshness of certain marks he had left—still warm—could not have passed many minutes before we came up.

The scenery of the forest is gloomy in the extreme, and the road very bad, with three awkward nullahs to cross. The trees are small and stunted, and apparently sickly, as if even they

suffered from the pestilential vapours with which, at certain seasons, the air is loaded. There is no underwood, but the spaces between the trees are choked up with a coarse, rank grass, some nine or ten feet high, which prevents the circulation of air, and in its decayed state gives forth the malaria which renders this jungle almost uninhabitable.

The glimpses of the hills which we occasionally got through the openings among the tree-tops were very beautiful; and the green turf and luxuriant woods which clothed their sides formed a striking contrast to the gloomy jungle, rank grass, and poisonous-looking herbage through which we were toiling. It was like passing through the valley of death to Paradise.

When about two miles from the bungalow—ourselves and horses in a perfect steam of perspiration, and every pulse throbbing as if the veins were filled with molten lead—we encountered a thunderstorm, and about the heaviest fall of rain I have ever seen, even in India, which in five minutes drenched us to the skin. We had been told before starting that to get wet through in this jungle, after being overheated, insured certain fever, if not death; so Lewis and I (for Short and the Doctor, like prudent men, travelled in palanquins), taking the milder view of the case, made up our minds to spending our three months' leave on the sick list; but, in the meantime, could not help acknowledging that this shower-bath, after a hot ride, was rather refreshing than otherwise. Our gloomy forebodings, however, were not realised. We galloped on to the bungalow, where we immediately changed our clothes, taking the further precaution of imbibing a pretty stiff dose of raw brandy; and the result was that we never felt the slightest bad effect from our ducking.

After halting for a couple of hours, and getting something

to eat, we commenced the ascent of the pass, which is five miles long, and exceedingly steep—the height ascended in the course of five miles being nearly 6000 feet. Mrs. Reed rode a little hill-pony which had been sent down to meet her; and we walked; our horses being pretty well tired by the long march and bad road through the forest. We 'put a stout heart to a stey brae;' and after two hours of the hardest walking I have had in this country, we reached the bungalow of Neddoobetta, at the top of the Goodaloor Pass, about half an hour after nightfall. Here we found Clark—'of ours'—who has been for some time on the hills for the benefit of his health, waiting to receive us; and here, for the first time since leaving England, we enjoyed the luxuries of blue noses, tingling fingers, a roaring fire, and a screeching hot tumbler of brandy-and-water, all in perfection.

The change was magical; and we could hardly realise the fact that, in the course of two hours' walk, we had transported ourselves from a climate where the thermometer stood at 90°, and the blood boiled in our veins, to a region where the ground was every morning covered with hoar-frost, and where a roaring fire and a couple of blankets were not only comfortable, but absolutely necessary. I found it so cold that I could hardly sleep, and was obliged to get up several times during the night to replenish the fire.

Next morning, after breakfast, we walked out to enjoy the magnificent view from the top of the pass, by far the grandest thing I have seen in India.

From the point on which we stood the descent was so rapid, that it appeared as if one could have pitched a stone into the plain, which glowed under the fiery heat of the tropical sun, some 6000 feet below us; and looked so intolerably hot, that the recollection of yesterday's march made us pant

and thank heaven for the change, as we gulped down gallons of the pure cold mountain air.

After luncheon we started for Ootacamund—our destination—and arrived in time for dinner with wolfish appetites; but, to our disgust, found nothing to eat, but a few eggs and bread and butter, with some tea. The house was damp and only half furnished, and there being also a scarcity of firewood, we spent a cold, uncomfortable evening. We vented our wrath on poor Clark—who had volunteered to act as our house-agent and caterer—deposed him on the spot, as incompetent; and the Doctor reigned in his stead.

Next morning, thanks to the Doctor, who has a decided taste for good living, and a wonderful talent for catering, we found a splendid breakfast provided, and a roaring fire in the grate, which put us all in good humour again. The morning air was fresh and crisp—almost frosty; the thrush, or a bird with a very similar note, was singing gaily; the sun shone brightly, and our ears were regaled by the homelike sound of a purling mountain stream, which flowed under our windows; in short, were it not for the shivering native servants by whom we were attended, there was nothing to remind us that we were still in India. But still the house was damp, dirty, and ill furnished; so we got off our bargain by forfeiting a month's rent; and are now comfortably established in one of the best houses in the place. It is beautifully furnished—the walls papered, windows curtained, glass doors, marble mantelpieces, English grates—in short, everything in the style of the best English cottage; and with the fragrance of roses, heliotrope, mignonette, geranium, and violets filling the room, to say nothing of a cheerful wood fire, there is an air of home comfort that savours more of a cottage orné on the banks of the Thames than an Indian bungalow 8000 feet above

the level of the sea, and only 11° north of the Equator. The rent, to be sure, is rather high, Rs. 250 or £25 per month ; but this divided between five of us is not very ruinous.

I find here my old friend General Sir John Dalrymple and his family, consisting of Lady Dalrymple and three daughters. They gave me a hearty welcome, and a kindly invitation to drop in and spend my evenings with them whenever I felt inclined. I have also, through them, made the acquaintance of Judge Lushington,* a fine specimen of the old English squire —rather rough in manner, and choleric exceedingly, making use of very strong language when excited, but kind-hearted and hospitable to a degree. He is a keen sportsman, and a good shot, and I have no doubt would be a deer-stalker, were it not that he has become much too stout for mountain climbing ; but being unable to do so, he keeps a pack of hounds, and draws the woods in the neighbourhood about once or twice a week, sometimes shewing good sport. I like what I have seen of him exceedingly ; and greatly admire his pretty daughter Hester, who is the most charming girl I have seen in India.

My favourite sport being deer-stalking—a sport which is evidently not understood here—I lost no time in exploring the neighbouring country in search of game, and the result was decidedly satisfactory.

The so-called sportsmen of Ootacamund, whom I have already discovered to be thorough 'mulls,'† are mightily amused at the idea of my going out single-handed, in pursuit of 'elk,' as they are pleased to call the sambar. They assure

* Lorimer of the Old Forest Ranger.

† A nickname, nearly equivalent to our English 'Cockney,' applied to the inhabitants of the Madras Presidency by their brother sportsmen of the Bombay Presidency. Madras, not being a good country for large game, does not in general turn out such good riders or crack rifle-shots as Bombay. Hence the Bombay men, who pride themselves on being the best sportsmen in India, look down upon their brethren of Madras, and call them 'mulls.'

me, with the confidence of experienced hunters, that without five or six couple of hounds, and lots of beaters to drive the woods, it is labour in vain to look for them ; and strongly advise me to join them in their favourite sport of shooting partridge, quail, and jungle-fowl, to cockers.

So much for your knowledge of woodcraft, O ye mulls, thought I, but said nothing. I knew that if there were deer in the woods, they must come out morning and evening to feed ; and if they came into the open, I saw no good reason why I should not bring my old rifle, ' Killdevil,' to bear upon some of them within reasonable distance.

The first day I went out proved a blank. I saw plenty of deer, but being entirely unacquainted with the ground, I missed my stalk, and returned empty-handed, but in good spirits withal, having made myself thoroughly acquainted with the nature of the ground, and marked into cover a large herd of deer within two miles of the cantonment—a circumstance which I of course kept to myself; but which enabled me to bear the chaffing of my friends, the mulls, like a philosopher. Next day I returned in triumph with the old stag of the herd, slung on a bamboo, and borne by twelve stout mountaineers staggering under their load ; and from this time forth had good sport, and was no longer laughed at. Short and Lewis, on seeing the stag, were fired with a noble emulation, and insisted in joining me in my next expedition ; but Short being a regular Londoner, and Lewis not having been trained to woodcraft in his youth ; neither of them could see any fun in the hard work of stalking ; they returned tired and disgusted, and immediately went over to the mull faction. And my friend the Doctor—whose favourite weapon is an old fusee loaded with slugs—considers one day a week with Lushington's hounds quite sporting enough for his taste ; so I have the stalking of the hills pretty well to myself.

CHAPTER XX.

THE NEILGHERRY HILLS.

THE Neilgherry Hills are situated between the parallels of 11° and 12° north latitude, and 76° and 77° east longitude—an isolated mass of mountain rising from the table-land of Mysore and the Carnatic, to the height of 8700 feet above the level of the sea. Their base, covering a surface of about 200 miles, is surrounded by a zone of dense jungle from five to twenty miles wide. This belt of jungle being very unhealthy, and almost impenetrable, protected the virgin hills from the intrusion of Europeans till the year 1819, when they were, for the first time, visited by a party of adventurous sportsmen from Coimbatoor, who forced their way through the surrounding forest and reached the summit of the hills. They spoke in raptures of the appearance of the country, and of the climate; and soon afterwards published an account of their tour in the Madras journals. But, strange to say, this account failed to attract much public attention. In 1820 another party, accompanied by a lady, ascended the hills. In 1821 a pass was opened to the mountains by Government, and some families took up their temporary abode there. Since then the beautiful cantonment of Ootacamund has been gradually increasing; a handsome church, a military hospital, several excellent shops, and many good houses, have been erected; and for several years back it has become a favourite resort, during the hot season, for the inhabitants of Bombay as well as Madras.

I have no hesitation in stating that I believe the climate of the Neilgherry Hills to be about the finest in the known world. Lying between the parallels of 11° and 12° north latitude, they enjoy all the brilliancy and splendid moonlight of the tropics, while their great elevation (8700 feet) not only tempers the heat, but gives to the air a pureness and elasticity unknown elsewhere. A meteorological table, kept on the hills from March 1825 to March 1826, makes the maximum of the thermometer at noon 69° (Fahrenheit), and the minimum 55°; the maximum at 6 A.M. 60,° and the minimum 31.° Is it possible to conceive a climate more perfect than this?

The Neilgherry Hills are inhabited by several distinct tribes—the Todas or Tudas, who claim to be the aborigines and lords of the soil, a purely pastoral people; the Burghers, an agricultural people; the Cohatars, and the Curumbars.

The Todas are a very peculiar and strikingly handsome race, quite distinct in appearance from any other tribe in India. Whence they come, and who they are, no one has been able to discover. Although they are but a small minority of the population (the total number of adults not being supposed to exceed 600 or 700 souls), they claim to be lords of the soil, and this claim seems to be acknowledged by the Burghers and other tribes, who willingly pay them tribute.

They do not cultivate the land, but lead a purely pastoral life, keeping large herds of buffaloes, of a much larger and finer breed than those of the plains. The cow, so much valued by the people of the low country, they do not consider worth keeping; the milk of the buffalo being preferred. Their food consists of milk, prepared in various ways, and butter, with meal and parched grain, procured from the Burghers in exchange for butter, or as tribute. They do not keep dogs, nor do they possess weapons of any kind. I have never even

seen a knife among them, nor anything more formidable than a long wand, which the men generally carry in their hand for the purpose of driving their buffaloes. It appears strange that, living as they have done for ages in a country abounding with deer and other game, no Nimrod should ever have sprung up among them; yet so it is. They appear not to have any taste for animal food, and never kill a buffalo except during the celebration of their funeral obsequies, when they are offered up in sacrifice; the victims being beaten to death with clubs, and their flesh sold to the Cohatars—a very carnivorous race, who eat beef or any other animal food with avidity; but who do not possess any weapon sufficiently formidable to kill wild animals. They always attend the funerals and obsequies of the Todas, receiving from them the carcases of the buffaloes offered in sacrifice at an almost nominal price—about half a rupee each.

The men of the Toda tribe are fine manly-looking fellows, tall and muscular, with an open expressive countenance and bold bearing, which at the first glance satisfies you they must be of a different race from their neighbours of the low country. They have large, full, expressive eyes, and high well-marked features of a decidedly Jewish type. They wear no covering to the head, and their hair and luxuriant beard is allowed to grow to its full length—the hair being parted in the centre. Their dress consists of a web of coarse cotton cloth, arranged much in the form of the Roman toga, leaving the right arm free—which, with the long flowing beard, and grave dignified expression, gives them a grand patriarchal appearance. The dress of the women is formed of the same material as that of the men, but is less gracefully arranged, being wound round them from head to foot, giving them a mummy-like appearance. They are, however, very particular in the arrangement

of their hair, which is generally bright and glossy, falling in long flowing ringlets over their neck. They are of a lighter complexion than the men, and some of them are remarkably handsome. Though frank in their manner, and ready to enter into conversation with strangers with a freedom unknown among the women of the plains, they have a modest and retiring demeanour; and shew more refinement of feeling than any Orientals I have ever met with.

While polygamy prevails in the low country, the still more extraordinary custom of polyandry is practised by the Todas. Each woman is allowed to have from three to four husbands, and may also have as many cicisbeos; but with this proviso, that it must be with the consent of those to whom she is already contracted—a favour which, I understand, is not generally refused. But, notwithstanding this strange custom, the women are in other respects strictly virtuous—much more so than the Hindoos or Mohammedans. I have never known or heard of a Toda woman going astray with a European.

I suppose this strange custom originated in the scarcity of women, caused by the barbarous custom of female infanticide which prevailed among them till within the last few years; but now that Government has put a stop to this, and that female as well as male children are reared, the present system of a plurality of husbands will probably fall into disuse.

As far as I could ascertain with regard to their domestic arrangements, it appears that the woman lives for a month at a time with each husband in succession; the first three children being claimed by the first husband, the next three by the second, and so on.

The language of the Todas is peculiar, having a deep pectoral intonation; it is quite distinct from the languages of

the surrounding countries, and does not appear to have the slightest affinity with any Asiatic language of the present day. They are altogether a very mysterious and interesting race of people.

The Burghers, who are the most numerous and wealthiest of the inhabitants, are Hindoos of the Siva sect, who have from time to time migrated from the low country. They cultivate the land, breed cattle, and inhabit villages like those of the low country. Their dress is somewhat similar to that of the Todas, but they wear turbans. Their language is the Carnatic dialect, with a small admixture of the Toda. They look up with respect to the Todas as a superior race, treat them with respect, and pay them a small tribute for the occupation of the land. They are a gentle, peaceful race, and, like the Todas, are without arms of any kind.

The Cohatars—a strange race—occupy many of the higher parts of the mountains. Their houses are similar to those of the Burghers, and they somewhat resemble these people in appearance ; but they are not Hindoos, and do not wear any covering to the head. They profess to worship some unknown God, but have no idols. They cultivate various kinds of millet, and sometimes a little barley. They keep considerable herds of cattle and buffaloes, but never milk them—any butter or ghee they may require on particular occasions being obtained from their neighbours. They are the only artificers of the hills. The women make pottery and baskets ; and among the men are found carpenters, goldsmiths, and workers in leather. They supply the Burghers with their agricultural implements, receiving payment in grain. They have a great craving for flesh, and will devour animal food of every kind without any squeamish scruples as to how the animal came by his death. The carcass of a bullock which has died of dis-

ease, or the remains of a deer half devoured by a tiger, are equally acceptable to them. I turn this craving for animal food to good account, by employing these people to beat the woods for game, a duty which they are always ready to perform for the sake of obtaining a share of the spoil. I could never persuade either Todas or Burghers to do so; and yet these Cohatars, with all this love for flesh, appear to have no idea either of killing or snaring wild animals. This is the only country abounding with game in which I have found the inhabitants utterly unarmed, and ignorant of the art of hunting.

The Curumbars are a wild race inhabiting the cliffs of the mountains at an elevation of about 2000 feet. They neither cultivate the ground nor keep cattle, and live in a state of barbarism. I have never met with any of them; and how they exist, whether by hunting or otherwise, I have not been able to ascertain.

Before starting for the hills, I provided myself with a stout Burmese pony, which I find invaluable for mountain riding; he is as strong as a little cart horse, and sure-footed as a goat, with the spirit and endurance of an Arab. No day is too long, and no hill too steep for him; his name is 'Ginger,' and he has a little dumpy Mahratta horsekeeper rejoicing in the name of 'Punch.'

Punch is a rare specimen of humanity. He is a perfect dwarf, hardly four feet high, but as strong as a little bull, with shoulders broad enough for a man of six feet, and tremendously muscular bandy legs, hairy exceedingly—so much so I cannot help fancying he must be a lineal descendant of the Queen of Sheba*—and like his charge 'Ginger,'

* It is written in the chronicles of Abyssinia that the famous Queen of Sheba came to visit "Souleymán, the son of Dáood." Now King Solomon, who had a keen eye for female beauty, was informed that the Queen of Sheba,

he is untiring. He is almost jet black, with a broad, smiling, good-humoured face, and is the best tempered, hard working creature I ever met with. He has a little black wife, not larger than himself, who acts as grass-cutter; so my pony establishment is perfect, and all the members of the family—who by the way live in the same stall, Punch and his wife sleeping under the pony's nose—are great favourites of mine. Before starting for the hills I thought it advisable to have a warm rug provided for each of my horses—rather gay affairs bound with red tape—but knowing 'Ginger' to be a hardy little brute, I did not consider it necessary to provide him with extra clothing. The day the new clothing arrived, I desired it to be put on the horses, and went to the stable to see how it fitted. Here I found Punch sitting in a corner, gazing enviously at the splendid new rugs and weeping bitterly.

"What is the matter, Punch?"

"O Sahib! this bad business. Big horse plenty fine new coat got, for go to hills—poor 'Ginger' no coat got—what for this business?"

Punch almost worshipped 'Ginger,' looking upon him as decidedly the finest horse in India; and this apparent slight put upon his favourite had almost broken his heart.

Punch's unfeigned grief touched my feelings, so I promised that 'Ginger' should be clothed as well as the best of them, and ordered a suit of clothing accordingly; but as I wished

although a beautiful woman, was disfigured by having hairy legs. Whereupon Solomon, being troubled in spirit, resolved to satisfy himself whether report had unjustly slandered the beautiful queen; and accordingly ordered plates of mirror to be let into the steps of his throne; so that when the queen ascended to salute him—her legs being reflected in the glass—he might see whether they were hairy or not. This was done; and lo! the queen's legs were very hairy.

to have it serviceable for a horse as well as a pony, I had it made the full size. Next morning, on visiting the stable, I found 'Ginger' enveloped in a splendid new rug bound with red, and Punch squatted on his heels behind him lost in admiration, and chanting a song of triumph, in honour of the new rug, which reached to the pony's heels.

"Well, Punch, are you and 'Ginger' satisfied now?"

"Yes, Sahib. 'Ginger' and me plenty salaam make—too much glad—big horse small coat got—'Ginger' too much fine big coat got—that good business!—ha! ha! plenty salaam make!" And poor Punch grinned and danced with delight, as he again surveyed the flowing drapery in which 'Ginger' was almost smothered.

On another occasion Punch came into my room one morning after breakfast, grinning from ear to ear, and asked me for some brandy.

"What do you want brandy for, Punch?"

"Please, Sahib, my wife little child got. That time brandy good medicine."

Before complying with Punch's request, I thought it advisable to visit Mrs. Judy in a professional way, and ascertain how she was.

I found her sitting on a bunch of straw under the pony's nose, as usual, looking as well as if nothing had happened; and, with true maternal pride, holding up to my admiring gaze her first-born—a little black miniature edition of Punch, the image of his father, and remarkably like a young monkey. I had some scruples about administering brandy; but as both Punch and his wife assured me it was good medicine in such cases, I let him have it. Whether Punch drank it all himself, or whether he shared it with his wife, I knew not; but at all events Mrs. Punch was all right next morning.

It is extraordinary how easily native women get over these little domestic troubles. I have known a Sepoy's wife give birth to a child at night, on the line of march; and follow her husband next morning with the child in her arms, as if nothing had happened.

My favourite sport, as I said before, is stalking deer; but I generally join Lushington's party when the 'elk-hounds'—as the 'mulls' call them—are out, more for the sake of society than sport (although we have a right good day's sport occasionally), and I never miss one of the Ladies' Days—a something between a hunt and a picnic, which is got up occasionally for the amusement of the fair Hester and her lady friends. On these occasions we draw the woods within easy reach of the station, which we do not generally disturb on other occasions; and although we do not bag so much game as we do further afield, I find this combination of hunting and flirting remarkably pleasant, particularly when pretty Hester—as she sometimes does—is kind enough to be my companion at a pass.

I kept a daily journal of my sport on the hills; but too much of this would be tedious, so I shall merely give a few extracts descriptive of the different kinds of sport. When bent on a stalking excursion, I generally went some distance and encamped for a day or two on the lower slopes of the hills, where the deer, being rarely disturbed, were more numerous than in the neighbourhood of Ootacamund. I frequently went alone, sometimes I found a man among the 'mulls' sportsman enough to enjoy a day's deer-stalking; and sometimes I managed to coax the dear old doctor to be my companion. He does not supply the beaters with much venison, although he makes the hills re-echo with the cannon-like report of his favourite gun 'Mons Meg;' but he enjoys the mountain scenery, and

his quaint Scotch wit, elicited by a tumbler or two of hot toddy, makes our evenings pass right pleasantly.

October 10th.—I have succeeded in making a convert of my friend Little, who is really a good sportsman, and can feel the fascination of deer-stalking, and follow it with something like enthusiasm. He and I rode out yesterday evening to Melloor, whither I had sent my tents the day before.

> "And look, along the forest glade,
> From out that ancient pine-wood's shade,
> Troop forth the royal deer.
> Each stately hart, and slender hind,
> Stares and snuffs the desert wind;
> While, by their side confiding roves
> The spring-born offspring of their loves."

So wrote some one, who, I doubt not, had followed the wild deer with beating heart and throbbing veins.

I shall not readily forget the first evening I spent on the edge of the Ghauts, near Melloor, watching the sambar coming 'trooping forth' from the dark ravines below me. For some time previously, their deep trumpet-like cry had been heard echoing up the valleys, but none appeared till the lengthening shadows of the blue mountains threw a deep gloom over the landscape. Then the old hinds began to steal cautiously from the ravines, restless and jealous, snuffing the air, and glancing suspiciously around before settling to feed. Soon after, a royal stag, with swelling throat and towering antlers, saunters towards them, stopping at intervals to crop a tempting blade of young grass, then throwing up his noble head, and assuring himself, by his keen sense of smell, that there is no danger in front, before trotting up to join his herd. Another and another appears, as if they had sprung from the earth; and before the sun had fully set, there were upwards of twenty

deer feeding below me, little knowing by whom they were watched.

It was needless to attempt to approach them; for even if I could have stalked them—which the nature of the ground rendered impossible—darkness would have overtaken me before I could have reached them.

I sat watching them with my telescope till their forms became indistinct in the dusk.

> "A moment more, and night sails slowly on,
> Lowering her wings, and darkening all, save where
> In the red west, plain, sky, and mountain glow."

And then to bed.

It was bitterly cold that night. The tent was frozen as stiff as a board. What with cold and excitement I could hardly close an eye. The deep trumpet-like cry of the sambar, wandering about in the clear moonlight, came echoing up from the valleys, and was answered at intervals from every hill within hearing. Was not this enough of itself to make a deer-stalker sleepless?

We were up by four o'clock,* and having refreshed ourselves with a cup of hot coffee and a pipe, we started on different beats.

I had to walk three miles to my ground, which I reached just as the light was beginning to render objects visible; and, seating myself on a rock, I swept the hills in front of me with my telescope.

One hind only was in sight; but suspecting that a stag must be near her—the rutting season being now approaching

* To a Highland deer-stalker, starting at this hour will seem absurd; but in India, where the deer lie concealed during the day in thick cover, where they cannot be stalked, the morning and evening hours, when they come out to feed, are the only times to get them.

—I stalked her with great caution, without approaching too near, and allowed her to feed on quietly, till she disappeared behind a swell in the ground. I now made a run to the crest of the rising ground, and in so doing, came suddenly upon a fine stag lying in high grass. So high was the grass, that when he rose I could only see his horns, and the top of his back. I hit him with both barrels, and he staggered at each shot, but did not fall—although I could see that one ball had taken him right through the shoulder. On he went, faint and sick, too weak to break from a slow trot. I saw his broad haunches disappear over the shoulder of the hill, and that was the last glimpse I had of him—many a weary hour was spent in trying to retrieve him, but all in vain.*

Little was more unfortunate than myself, not having got a shot.

In the evening we took another line, separating as before. On the side of a bare hill, commanding a view of a beautiful ravine, I took up my post, after having walked up a hind, which I did not fire at.

When the sun got low the wild cry of the pea-fowl commenced; soon after the deer began to call, and a stag shewed himself, rising from a clump of fern. As soon as he had settled to feed I moved to get the wind of him, lying down whenever he raised his head, and advancing again when he stooped to graze. Half an hour of intense excitement was thus passed. He fed on quietly, while I was creeping closer, closer, watching every movement he made, and ready to fire the moment he shewed a symptom of alarm. At last I found myself within certain range, and taking a steady aim with

* I found the remains of this stag three days afterwards within 300 yards of where I had fired at him: he was hit through the shoulder and the neck—both mortal wounds.

the two-ounce rifle, fired. I heard the ball hit, but he never staggered, and stood perfectly still, gazing stupidly about him. Snatching up the double rifle I gave him right and left, when he sprang into a gallop, and in his blind terror (for he did not appear to have any intention of charging) came right at me. Having no barrel loaded, I received him on my hunting-knife, the blade of which, eighteen inches long, sank to the hilt in his chest, and again I buried it in his body before he was clear of me. On he rushed madly, with erected mane ; the blood pouring from his breast, and dyeing the grass so effectually that I knew there was no chance of losing him now, go where he would ; so I reloaded, and followed on his trail. When I came in sight of him he was going quietly along, following the bed of a ravine, and apparently seeking for water.

Hearing me behind him he turned his head, and a two-ounce ball instantly crashed through his skull ; but still he stood firm, although apparently insensible, and never moved till I had reloaded and planted another ball between his eyes, when he dropped at last.

On examining the deer, I found one ball had passed right through him at the shoulder, a little above the heart ; another through his neck, close to the shoulder ; a third through his ribs ; the fourth through his skull, but too high up to touch the brain ; and the fifth, which finished him, between the eyes.

After this who can wonder at losing sambar even when well hit ? Such extraordinary tenacity of life I could not have credited had I not witnessed it.

Any one of the shots I have described, except the one through the ribs, would have brought down any ordinary stag, to say nothing of eighteen inches of cold steel in his

chest. Yet this brute never dropped, and hardly staggered, till he was hit between the eyes.

Little joined me near the spot where the stag fell. He had killed one hind, and hit another which got away.

The flesh of the sambar being coarse and tough—and at this season somewhat high-flavoured withal—we only carry home the head and the marrow-bones. The head makes good soup, and the marrow-bones are delicious. The remainder of the carcass we make over to the Cohatars, who, if not employed as beaters, follow in your wake like vultures, and speedily dispose of any game you may leave them. Having skinned the animal, they strip the flesh from the bones, pack it up in the hide, carry it home, and hang it up in strips to dry for future use.

October 11th.—This morning I was on the hill-tops by daybreak in search of a herd of ibex, which a Burgher informed me he had seen in our neighbourhood yesterday. Having reached a commanding point, I scanned the surrounding hills with my telescope, but no living thing was in sight; so seating myself comfortably in a sheltered nook, I enjoyed the glorious sight of a tropical sunrise, while my attendant native, who carried the spare rifle, kept a bright look-out. I was much struck with the extraordinary and beautiful appearance of the low country viewed from my eagle's perch on the edge of the precipice, which descended so abruptly you almost fancied you could have pitched a stone into the plain 6000 feet below.

Over-head the sky was blue and cloudless, and the rising sun had already begun to tip the higher peaks of the mountains with a rosy blush. But below the dense white vapour which enveloped the landscape reflected back the rays of light, presenting exactly the appearance of a frozen sea, covered with snow-wreaths; and to make the resemblance

still more striking, the dark naked summits of the higher lands, jutting out here and there, formed islands, capes, and promontories, which rendered the illusion complete. I sat smoking my pipe in a dreamy frame of mind, gazing on the glorious prospect till I almost fancied myself an ancient mariner, seated on the North Cape, and gazing over the Arctic Ocean. As the sun became more powerful, the mist rose in vast fleecy clouds, which rolled up the valleys, and gradually melted away; exposing the parched plains of the low country, glowing like heated copper under the vertical rays of a tropical sun.

I was roused from my reverie by a gentle tap on the shoulder from my attendant, whose sharp eye had detected the form of some animal among the cliffs several hundred feet below us; but as it was lying down, and a long way off, it was impossible to ascertain, with the naked eye, what species of animal it was. The telescope was quickly brought to bear upon him, when to my intense satisfaction I made him out to be a fine old buck ibex, the head of a family of six. He was reposing at his ease, leaving the care of his royal person to the jealous watchfulness of the females, by whom he was surrounded; and who, to do them justice, made admirably vigilant sentinels.

I was obliged to make a considerable detour to get the wind of them; but having done so, the broken nature of the ground favoured me, and I managed, without much difficulty, to stalk within 300 yards of the old buck; notwithstanding the vigilance of a knowing old doe, who kept watch on a projecting crag, and several times cast suspicious glances in the direction by which I was approaching. But here I found it was impossible to get a yard nearer, without alarming the watchful sentinel.

It was too long a shot for any great hopes of success, particularly as my rifle was only sighted up to 200 yards. But there was nothing else for it; so taking a guess elevation—shewing an inch of the barrel over the sight—I fired. The dear old rifle threw her ball true to the line, and the sharp report was answered by that dull thud so welcome to a sportsman's ear. The wounded buck made a convulsive bound to his feet, and stood tottering; while the remainder of the herd sprang on to the ledge where the sentinel doe stood, and grouped themselves around her in stupified amazement. I fired a random shot among them with the second barrel; and one of them—apparently hit through the heart—sprang into the air, and went headlong over the precipice, bounding from rock to rock till he fell, a shattered mass, a thousand feet below. The remainder of the herd rattled down the cliff, bounding from ledge to ledge, where there hardly appeared to be footing for a bird, and the poor stricken buck staggered slowly after them, evidently mortally hit. He had only strength to go a few yards when he lay down and died, and we got him up without much difficulty. But the other had fallen among such wild precipices, that even with the aid of some hill men, who came to assist us, we could not manage to reach him; so were reluctantly obliged to abandon his carcass to the vultures.

This is my first attempt at ibex-stalking, and I am well satisfied with my morning's work, for the animal is scarce and not easily got at.

I shall conclude this chapter with a description of this animal taken from my journal after having procured several other specimens.

The animal, to which I have ventured to give the name of the 'Ibex of the Neilgherries' is, without doubt, either a variety of the ibex, or wild goat, although the very inapplicable

name of *chamois* has been bestowed upon it by Madras sportsmen; but as they call the sambar an *elk*, the muntjak deer a *jungle-sheep*, and the bison a *wild bull*, this is hardly to be wondered at.

I am inclined to think this animal is a variety which has hitherto escaped the notice of naturalists; but this point I must leave to be decided by a better naturalist than I pretend to be.

The Neilgherry ibex is a large animal, with a short stout body, and stands high in proportion to his length. The male specimen from which my description is taken measured as follows—

Height at the shoulder . .	3 feet 6 inches.
Length from nose to end of tail .	6 feet 5 inches.

The horns—which are ten inches long—are nearly in contact at the base, from whence they curve backwards, gradually diverging, till at the points they are about five inches apart. A section of the horn forms nearly a triangle, flat and smooth on the inner side; the anterior angle acute; and the outer and posterior sides of the triangle rounded off and marked with transverse wrinkles, deep in front, and shading off gradually towards the rear. The nose is considerably arched, giving the animal a ram-like appearance. The general colour of the animal is a dark ashy gray above, and white below, with a dark line along the back. The eye is surrounded by a spot of fawn colour, and the cheeks, fore part of the face, and muzzle, are dark brown. The fore part of the legs is dark brown, and the hinder part white. There is a large callous spot on the knees, surrounded by a fringe of hair. The hoofs are large, coarse, and blunted. The hair is short, thick, and of a coarse texture, and the male is furnished with a stiff upright mane on the neck and shoulders. The smell

of the animal is strong and disagreeable like that of an old buck goat. They generally go in herds of eight or ten, and are only to be found among the wildest precipices, on the rocky summits of the Koondah range, or the precipitous mountains which overlook the low country. The strength and agility with which they bound from rock to rock are amazing in so large an animal. They are so exceedingly shy that it requires much patience and perseverance to get within shot of them; and their favourite haunts being almost inaccessible to the foot of man, the pursuit of them is attended with great difficulty and fatigue, and even with danger; particularly if the hunter is so unfortunate as to be overtaken by a fog.

The female differs from the male in having more slender horns, no mane, a finer formed head, and being without the brown marks on the face.

Now I can only find two animals to which this description will in any way apply—viz., the 'Caucasian ibex,' and 'the beardless goat.' But in several particulars the ibex of the Neilgherries differs from either of them.

Let us first take the Caucasian ibex, as described in the enlarged English edition of Cuvier's 'Animal Kingdom.' He agrees with our animal in colour, in his general figure, and in his habits. But he differs greatly in size, being only about five feet long, and two feet eight inches high at the shoulder; whereas the ibex of the Neilgherries is six feet five inches in length, and stands three feet six inches at the shoulder. The horns also, although formed alike in both animals, do not exceed *ten* inches in the ibex of the Neilgherries; while in the Caucasian ibex—a much smaller animal—they are described as being *twenty-eight* inches in length.

'The beardless goat' is described as bearing a strong resemblance to the Caucasian ibex; and in so far agrees with

the general description of our animal. He has also got the ram-like head and the mane on the neck ; but he differs in having a dewlap, which is wanting in the ibex of the Neilgherries, and in his colour, which is described as variegated black and white *irregularly scattered.*—Rather a vague description, by the way.

Whether these distinguishing marks entitle this animal to be classed as a new variety of ibex, I must leave for naturalists to decide. In the meantime, I think I am justified in rescuing the poor beast from the hands of the 'mulls,' and changing his name from *chamois* to *ibex.**

* Since the above was written I have seen in the British Museum a specimen of an animal ticketed 'Jahral or Jehr (*Capra Jamlaica*—Nepal),' which, in appearance and colour, and in the form of the horns, closely resembles the ibex of the Neilgherries. The head, however, is less ram-like, and the horns less robust, and it is clothed with long instead of short hair.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE NEILGHERRY HILLS.—(*Continued.*)

Ootacamund, October 20th.—What a glorious climate this is! I have been here little more than a fortnight, yet this has sufficed to shake off the lassitude occasioned by two years of pretty hard work in a tropical climate. The air is so pure and bracing that it exhilarates you like laughing-gas, and makes you feel mere existence to be a positive pleasure.

I find the 'mulls' very good fellows in their way; although their inveterate taste for small-game shooting, and their obstinacy in calling animals by their wrong names, make me savage.

As far as I can judge from one day's experience of small-game shooting—for I never could be persuaded to try another—this style of sport, on the hills, is very poor work.

Jungle-fowl, although tolerably numerous, are hard to find, and harder still to beat up; I have never heard of more than three brace having been killed in a day. Snipe and quail abound in the swamps and valleys. But who would go minnow-fishing in a salmon river? Hares are plentiful enough; but as they always lie in the thickest cover, not one in twenty is shot. Pea-fowl are only found in the largest and thickest woods, where shooting is almost impossible; and the man who bags one in a month considers himself a mighty hunter; and yet in this glorious country, which is a natural deer-forest—and a well-stocked one too—these happy 'mulls' go

on blazing away; rejoicing in their glorious shots, flogging their unfortunate curs if they give tongue on the scent of a deer, and laughing at my insane love for the hard work of stalking.

Well, well, there is no accounting for taste; so, if they enjoy their own style of sport, why should I object?

That quaint old fellow Burton, in his 'Anatomy of Melancholy,' after a dissertation on hunting, thus writes :—

"Fowling is more troublesome, but all out as delightsome to some sorts of men; be it with guns, lime, nets, glades, ginns, strings, baits, pitfalls, pipes, calls, stawking-horses, setting-doggs, coy-ducks, etc., or otherwise. Some much delight to take larks with day-nets; small birds with chaffe-nets; plovers, partridge, herons, snipe, etc. Henry the Third of Castile (as Mariana the Jesuit reports of him, *lib.* iii. *cap.* 7), was much affected with catching of quails; and many gentlemen take a singular pleasure, at morning and evening, to go abroad with their quail-pipes, and will take any pains to satisfy their delight in that kinde."

From such men must the 'mulls' be descended; and so they are guided by their instinct to seek after 'feathered fowles.'

But why will they persist—in spite of all my arguments to the contrary—in calling a sambar an *elk*, and making one bilious by talking of *jungle-sheep* and *wood-lambs?* I made 'a nice young gentleman for a tea-party' frantic the other day, on his informing me that he had killed a *jungle-sheep*, by asking him whether it was a *ram* or a *ewe*—the animal in question being the muntjak, or rib-faced deer, about as much like a sheep as a cow.

Every one is talking of the wonderful animal shot yesterday on the Koondah range by Captain B——; or, as a newspaper

paragraph would have it, "The cantonment of Ootacamund has been thrown into a state of excitement."

It is said to be a *wild bull*, and the only one ever seen or heard of in India.

I called this morning on the fortunate sportsman, who kindly exhibited his '*spolia opima*;' and what did this rare specimen turn out to be but a common Indian bison—and a very small one—which had apparently strayed up to the hills from the jungle below.

It was in vain for me to attempt to persuade a 'mull' to give an animal its right name; so the head is to be stuffed, preserved as a curiosity, and ticketed 'wild bull;' and a wild-bull let it be.

We have a sporting, but exceedingly pedantic, chaplain here, who is very ambitious of slaying a deer, but hitherto without success. He says he finds "the wild bucks so exceedingly *bashful* that it is impossible to approach them." I met him the other day, on my return from shooting, when the following dialogue ensued :—

"Good evening, Captain Campbell. Have you been pursuing the wild bucks as usual?"

"Yes; I have just returned from Milloor."

"Ah! did you succeed in capturing venison?"

"I shot an old stag; but I would pity you were you obliged to dine off his venison."*

"Ah, indeed! How did you capture him—with a *musket?*"

I informed him that I believed Robinson Crusoe and his man Friday were the last performers with a *musket* in pursuit of game, of whom we had any authentic record. And so we parted.

* This being the commencement of the rutting season, the flesh of a stag is much too high-flavoured to suit the palate of a European, although it is very acceptable to our friends the Cohatars.

October 20th.—I went out to-day with Little's hounds to see the Madras method of driving the woods for deer; and as it afforded several instances of extraordinary bad luck, also illustrative of the marvellous tenacity of life possessed by the sambar, I shall give a short description of it.

Little's pack consists of about thirty couple of dogs of high and low degree; fox-hounds, harriers, spaniels, genuine pariahs, and every possible cross, compound, and concatenation, of each of the above. They are a queer lot to look at, but do their work of rousing the deer, and driving them to the passes, admirably; and have this great advantage, that they do not follow their game too far. Staunch hounds that stuck to their scent would drive the deer down the ghauts into the jungle below; and hounds that do so are rarely heard of again, being pretty sure to be picked up by a tiger or a leopard, before they can find their way back.

Lushington's hounds, which are better bred—being a cross between the English fox-hound and the large poligar dog of India—are frequently lost in this way.

We are encamped at a beautiful spot about fourteen miles from Ootacamund, near a Burgher village, and close to the edge of the ghauts. After breakfast we proceeded to draw a large wood, within half a mile of the tents, which the villagers assured us would be a sure find.

Little kindly insisted on my taking the best pass—a well-beaten deer-path leading across the shoulder of the hill, on the top of which was the cover.

I had just taken up a good position behind a lump of gray rock, when Little's bugle gave the signal to throw the hounds—or rather dogs—into cover; and the echo had hardly died away among the hills, when an old hound spoke.

A grand crash followed. The woods rang with the chorus of

the pack, the yells of the dog-boys, and the stirring sound of the horn. The rush of a heavy animal was heard tearing through the cover, and away broke a noble stag, his spreading antlers hanging over his haunches, as with head thrown back, and every hair on his deep shaggy neck standing erect—like a mane of whalebone—he came galloping across the shoulder of the hill, in a direct line for my pass.

I cocked my rifle, crouched lower, and lay like a tiger in ambush thirsting for blood. But the fates had decreed that the blade of my hunting-knife should not this day be dimmed with blood. The stag suddenly altered his course, took directly down hill, and passed a long way out of range; while I sat grinding my teeth, and watching his dun hide glancing through the fern, till he disappeared in a dark glen on the opposite side of the valley.

A few hounds, which had followed the stag for about half a mile, passed through a small wood on their return; and from this a stag and two hinds crossed over to the hill where I was posted. They were not making directly for my pass, but as they came on slowly I had time to make a run and intercept them before they were quite out of range. The stag lagged behind, and eventually stopped in a thickly-wooded ravine; and the hinds only advanced, skirting along the base of the hill, and passing within about 250 or 300 yards of where I lay. One stopped to listen; the first ball knocked up the dust under her feet; the second plashed into her long neck, and down she came, apparently killed dead. Having reloaded, I took a good look at her with the telescope, and saw she was hit behind the ears, and lying quite still, as if dead; but on reaching the spot—which took me some time, on account of the thickness of the thorny brushwood which covered the side of the hill—I found

nothing but a pool of blood; and a long search and vain attempt to pick out the trail, through fern and lemon-grass six feet high, ended in a complete failure.

In the meantime Little was drawing on towards me. The hounds gave tongue, the crack of a rifle followed, and my heart was gladdened by the sound of hoofs clattering over the stones, and coming in my direction. All was again silent. I feared the deer had got the wind of me. No; on they come again, a splendid pair of forked antlers shewing above the grass. Three hinds broke cover, and passed close by me unmolested. The cunning old stag approaches more cautiously; he stops to listen, and throws up his noble head, displaying the dark shaggy ruff which clothed his neck like the mane of a lion. Another crash from the hounds, hot upon his track, drove him on again, bursting through the tangled underwood, which closed upon his path, as waves wash over a ship's wake. He passed within fifty yards of me. A low whistle attracted his attention, making him halt for an instant. A ball from the two-ounce rifle hit him close behind the shoulder, and he sank down quietly, apparently never to rise again. But taking warning by my recent experience with the hind, I thought I might as well make sure of him; so, approaching some ten yards nearer—where the branch of a tree afforded a steady rest—I fired both barrels of my double rifle into his chest as he lay, and desired the native who carried my spare gun to go and bleed him, while I reloaded.

The man had just laid hold of his horn, and was stooping over him, knife in hand, when, to my utter astonishment, the powerful brute, making one desperate struggle, regained his legs, threw the man on his back, shook his heavy antlers as if to balance their weight, and made off at a gallop, which carried

him in a few strides into a wilderness of long grass, where he disappeared.

The brutes of dogs, on coming to the blood where the deer had fallen, stopped short, and could not be induced to follow him a yard further; and I returned, after spending hours in vainly attempting to find him, disgusted and mortified beyond measure. Little had also knocked over a stag, which he lost.

This was pretty well in the way of bad luck for one day; but not all. On our way home, we came suddenly on a pack of wild dogs. Little got a fair shot at one, which rolled over apparently in the agonies of death; but before we could reach him, he too contrived to scramble off, and fairly beat us, although a piece of one of his ribs, about two inches long, had been driven through his side;—we found it among the blood at the place where he had fallen. And so we returned to our tents down-hearted and empty-handed, after a most unsatisfactory day's sport.

October 21*st.*—Disgusted with my bad luck yesterday, I started this morning—in a misanthropic frame of mind—to have a quiet stalk; and met with another instance of the sambar's wonderful tenacity of life. I found a small stag—which the ancients would have called a brockett—feeding at daybreak, among high grass. I stalked to within sixty yards of him, and hit him in the shoulder with a two-ounce ball, which I afterwards ascertained had passed through the opposite shoulder-blade. Away he went, receiving another ball near the centre of the body as he turned. Owing to the great height of the grass, we could not keep him in sight; and, as he lost but little blood, we found great difficulty in following his trail. We lost it at last, after having spent much time in picking it out step by step, when I observed three deer going away ahead. Running to the crest of the

hill, I fired at the hindmost, which dropped to the shot; and on going up to it, I found it to be the wounded stag, hit as I have described, by the two first shots; the third had taken him through the loins.

Now, this deer, when I fired the last shot, was running with the others apparently untouched; and, although mortally wounded, would have been lost, had I not hit him with the third shot.

Sitting down to rest, while my native follower was employed in cutting up the deer, I scanned the surrounding heights with my telescope; and on a rocky peak, some thousand feet above me, I discovered an ibex on the watch, evidently the sentinel of a herd.

The first thing to be considered, in approaching ibex, is the possibility of getting above them. From below, I believe it is impossible to elude their vigilance; but they rarely look up to guard against danger; and once above them—if you avoid giving them your wind—they are as easily stalked as deer.

With my glass, I could see clearly that I was observed and watched by the ibex; so, without attempting concealment, I walked straight away from him, till I was out of sight; when I made a detour, and climbed up the rocks behind him, sheltered by a swell in the hill.

After a long and tedious climb, I succeeded in getting above his level; and creeping cautiously to the edge of the precipice, I lay down flat, and peeped over. Directly under me were five ibex, within a hundred yards; the largest, an old buck, perched on a commanding rock, and still jealously watching my man—whom I had purposely left below—while the others were quietly feeding.

Selecting the old buck for my victim, I took a steady shot

at his shoulder. He staggered, but did not fall; and as he stood reeling to and fro, I gave him the second barrel, which dropped him dead on the spot he had so carefully guarded.

I felt a sort of remorse of conscience at having circumvented and slain this faithful sentinel; and although the remainder of the herd stood for some seconds gazing in stupified amazement at their fallen leader, before they took to flight, I refrained from using my second rifle; and lay watching their splendid action, as they sprang from ledge to ledge, till they disappeared beyond a projecting crag.

Leaving my guns above, I clambered down by a deer-path, and after some hard work, managed, with the assistance of a Burgher, to drag the slain ibex to a place of safety, where we left him till people could be procured to carry him into camp.

On my way home, just as it was getting dusk, I came upon a bear feeding at the bottom of a deep ravine, which I had occasion to cross. He was about 150 yards off, and so intent on the important business of foraging for his supper, that he did not observe me; so, dropping behind a rock, I pulled out my telescope, and watched his proceedings. He was busily engaged in grubbing up the earth with his claws, seeking for roots, or something else, which he devoured with much apparent satisfaction.

From time to time he rested from his labours, and, sitting up on his hind-quarters, looked around with an air of stupid inquiry, to see if the coast was clear; and then set to work again, grubbing for his supper, in happy ignorance that his mortal enemy, 'the man with the gun,' was watching him, and that this was to be his last feed.

Having satisfied my curiosity by studying old Bruin's domestic habits for some time, I exchanged the telescope for the two-ounce rifle; and taking a steady rest over the rock,

sent the heavy ball crashing through his shoulder. He uttered a savage yell, and made a feeble attempt to climb the hill; but his strength failing him, he rolled back, and lay in the bottom of the ravine, till I descended and finished him—as he rose on his hind legs, and extended his arms for a parting hug—by firing both barrels of my double gun into his broad chest.

Thy skin, O Bruin! now forms a rug, on which repose the dainty little feet of the fair Hester. So, if thy ghost still haunts the spot where thou wast foully slain, let this be balm to thy troubled spirit.

Were I to continue the detailed account which my journal affords, of three months' sporting on the hills, it would fill chapters and weary my readers. I have already given a sketch, however imperfect, of our system of stalking and driving deer; and shall wind up my Neilgherry hunting 'log' by trying to describe a ladies' day with Lushington's hounds.

I find, on looking over my journal, that I have no good description of a 'ladies' day' till two years later, when I had been appointed aid-de-camp to Sir John Dalrymple, then commanding the southern division of the Madras army at Trichinopoly; and revisited the Neilgherry Hills with Lady Dalrymple and her daughters. So, as we are not bound to chronological order, I shall take the liberty of skipping over a couple of years, and giving an extract from my journal of that date.

And here let me remark that the appointment of aid-de-camp to a general officer in India is by no means a bad thing. You draw more than double pay, live in the general's

house, and have nothing to do except writing a few letters, making yourself agreeable to visitors, and escorting the young ladies of the family in their morning and evening rides.

A lady—rather a fast one—remarked to me one day that she thought aids-de-camp the most charming people in the world.

"Why?" I asked.

"Because they have nothing to do but to make love!"

So far as our duties are concerned—in time of peace, at least—she was not far wrong; and I believe we try—like good soldiers—to do our duty to the best of our ability.

Now for the extract.

Trichinopoly, 5th November.—I have just returned after spending six weeks on the Neilgherry Hills, which are as delightful as ever, and where I found all the rulers of the land assembled—Lord William Bentinck, the Governor-General of India; Sir Frederick Adam, Governor of Madras; and Sir Robert O'Callagan, our Commander-in-Chief; besides sundry 'second-chop Mandareens,' and big-wigs of inferior caste.

I did myself the honour of waiting upon all of them, and by all of them I was most graciously received. The Governor-General asked me twice to dinner. Sir Frederick Adam gave me a general invitation to breakfast and dine at his table whenever I chose to do so, as if I had been one of his own staff; and my sporting propensities having found favour in the eyes of our chief, Sir Robert—who is a keen sportsman himself and a dead shot—I got so far into his good graces that he never went on a hunting excursion without sending me notice, and asking me to join him.

In the way of lady acquaintances I was equally fortunate. Our next-door neighbour, Mrs. E——, was one of the most charming, beautiful, and lady-like creatures I ever met with; and one of the few ladies I have seen in India who came up to my idea of what a thorough-bred Englishwoman ought to be.

Fortunately for me she had become an intimate friend of Lady Dalrymple and her daughters before I arrived; so that by accompanying Miss Dalrymple when she went to spend the morning with her, and escorting them in their evening rides, I soon got upon easy visiting terms. But without this introduction I should never have had the good fortune to make her acquaintance.

She is very shy at making new acquaintances, and is exceedingly reserved with strangers—more particularly so at present, as her husband is absent in the low country; and with the exception of the Dalrymples and the Lushingtons, no one in Ootacamund can boast of more than a bowing acquaintance with the charming and exclusive Mrs. E——.

Our only other lady acquaintances were Mrs. and Miss L——. Miss L—— is a dear little girl, quite in a different style from Mrs. E——, but almost equally fascinating in her own way.

Mrs. E—— is a pale dark Spanish-looking beauty, with a quiet, almost pensive expression of countenance; eyes like a gazelle, shaded by the most bewitching eyelashes; magnificent hair, and a figure like a sylph. She is naturally shy; and, among strangers, is so quiet and reserved, that at first sight you are inclined to set her down as a pretty automaton—exceedingly ornamental no doubt, though not the least likely to prove either an useful or agreeable member of society.

But see her—as we do—chatting and laughing sociably

with a few intimate friends ; or better still, hear her pouring out her whole soul in one of the beautiful ballads she sings with such refined taste, and deep feeling, as almost to stop one's breath ;—see her then, as her dark eye flashes with the fire of inspiration, and the eloquent blood, mounting to her pale cheek, suffuses it with

'A transparent glow,
As if her veins ran lightning.'

See her then, and—die.

Miss L——, as I remarked before, is quite a different style of beauty, but a darling in her own way. She is about nineteen, with fair golden hair, violet-blue eyes, rosy cheeks and dimples. A little laughing Hebe, not the least sentimental, but gentle and playful as a tame gazelle.

'She is not violently lively, but
Steals upon your spirit like a May-day breaking.'

But, with all her gentleness, she has the innate spirit of a thorough-bred English girl ; and enjoys a bit of innocent fun with all her heart. Her great delight is scampering over the hills on a little vicious beast of a pony, which kicks and rears, and fights with any horse which comes near him. And her next greatest pleasure appears to be tyrannizing over her unfortunate cousin Tom, who is desperately—and I fear hopelessly—in love with the pretty tyrant. She, feeling that he is well hooked, on good tackle, plays him pretty strongly ; much as you would handle a salmon under similar circumstances, when you feel you can bring him to the gaff at any moment.

I am more than half 'spoony' myself ; but, taking warning by poor Tom's fate, I do not own to the 'soft impeachment.' And being looked upon as a shy fish, difficult to rise, or at best as one but slightly hooked, I am played with a gentler hand.

Such are the ladies whom it is my pleasing duty, as aid-de-camp, to escort, when they join Miss Dalrymple in her mountain rides, and who grace our 'ladies' days' with Mr. Lushington's hounds.

We had several good days with Lushington's pack; but our last 'ladies' day' was a particularly good, and rather an adventurous one, so I must attempt a description of it.

Our meet was at a beautiful spot about nine miles from the cantonment of Ootacamund, in an out-of-the-way nook among the hills, which I had lately discovered during one of my stalking excursions, and to which I had given the name of 'the bear's glen,' in consequence of my having seen and killed my first bear there, and having been informed by the natives that it was a favourite haunt of the ursine family. It is a deep rocky ravine, the sides of which are all ablaze with the bright scarlet flowers of the rhododendron. At the head of the glen a grand waterfall rushes over a perpendicular ledge of rock, about 200 feet high, and plunges headlong into the dark ravine below, where it is heard roaring and chafing along its rocky bed. From the edge of this ravine the valley slopes gently upwards to the base of the lofty mountains by which it is surrounded, and is clothed with beautiful woods intermixed with patches of rich green pasture, so tastefully arranged by the hand of nature, as to give the idea of a noble park, laid out and planted with consummate skill. The only apparent outlet from this enchanting valley is by a wild gorge on the edge of the ghauts, through which the river makes its escape; this natural portal in the mountains affording a fairy-like peep of the glowing plains below. The ladies were enchanted with the beauty of the scenery; and my old friend Lushington—who took a professional view of things—swore 'by the bones of his ancestors' that that

poaching rascal 'Crop,'* who went stalking about the hills by himself, like a prowling wolf, had hit upon the best cover he had yet drawn.

Our party consisted of Mrs. E——, Miss L——, Miss Dalrymple; Sir Robert O'Callagan and two aids-de-camp; Mr. Lushington and his nephew; and myself.

As we thought it probable an old bear, or possibly a tiger, might turn up in the course of the beat—for this was a virgin cover, which had never before been disturbed by hounds—the ladies were not allowed to remain near the passes; but were posted on a rocky eminence overlooking the ravine, from whence they had a commanding view of the valley, and could see all that was going on without, apparently, being exposed to danger.

As I expected, these hitherto undisturbed woods were full of deer.

We had hardly got to our passes, before the pack were in full cry; and deer broke out from every corner, actually running in the men's faces.

In less than ten minutes three poor hinds had fallen at

* Lushington and I were great friends, although he gave me a hearty blessing occasionally—for *poaching*, as he called it—when I excited his envy by bringing home an unusually fine head, after a day's stalking. He generally managed to give me the best pass; and bestowed upon me the nickname of 'Crop,' in consequence of my wearing a round jacket without skirts, and carrying my ammunition in a pouch buckled round my waist—a style of dress which I found more convenient for jungle work than a shooting-coat with pockets.

When the 'Old Forest Ranger' first appeared in numbers in the New Monthly Magazine, under the assumed name of 'Koondah,' I was told by my brother (who was then on the Neilgherry Hills) that Mr. Lushington immediately recognised himself under the disguise of 'Old Lorimer,' and bursting into a roar of laughter, exclaimed—"I know who wrote this! It's that d—d fellow 'Crop.' No one but he could have told these stories."

the lower end of the cover—for I regret to say the members of the '*Elk Hunt*' spare neither sex nor age—a hind with a calf being considered quite as legitimate game as a stag.

I was posted near the head of the ravine, which proved the best pass, and, fortunately for the poor hinds, most of the deer broke out here; for out of about thirty deer, which passed within shot, all were hinds or calves except one, a grand old stag. I took a snap-shot at him as he galloped past, and heard the ball tell on his side, but he only staggered slightly and went on; and the riotous hounds were so busy with the fallen deer below, that I could not get one to put upon his scent.

After the first crash was over, and while the remainder of the party were drawing another wood, I took up my position in a nullah where there was the only pool of water within miles; knowing that if the stag was severely hit he would probably come here to drink; as the nullah led into the thickest part of the wood from which he had been roused; and there was no other good cover which he could reach without crossing the open.

It turned out as I expected. The panting of the poor brute warned me of his approach, long before he appeared; and keeping very still behind a rock, I calculated his proximity by listening to the increased distinctness of his breathings; for I dared not shew my head above the rock for fear of attracting his attention.

When I considered him near enough I rose; and there he was, covered with foam and mud, staggering through a marsh within pistol-shot. He was too faint to notice me, and I had time to take a steady shot at his shoulder, which dropped him dead. The first shot had passed through him near the centre of the body.

My good fortune continued, and I bagged another stag, and a wild boar* before the end of the day. No other deer were killed, but I fear many must have been wounded, for the amount of ammunition expended was prodigious. Everybody fired at everything within sight—stag, hind, and calf alike—and without reference to distance. I was thankful when it was all well over; for stray bullets were flying about in rather an alarming manner.

On this occasion the ladies had a narrow escape of being attacked by a bear. I was sitting at my pass, watching for a deer which the hounds were driving towards me; when I observed the ladies on the hill waving their handkerchiefs, shouting, and pointing with frantic gestures towards the edge of the wood above me.

From my position I could not see the object to which they wished to call my attention, and they were too far off to distinguish what they said; but I naturally concluded they had merely seen a deer break cover near them; so made signs for them to keep quiet, and remained at my pass till the end of the beat, when I ascended the hill and joined them.

On asking them why they had made "such a row" at the sight of a deer; great was my astonishment on being told that the animal they had seen, and tried to call my attention to, was not a deer, but a huge bear, which had slipped away unobserved, and passed along a ledge of rock only a few yards below where they were posted.

They declared they were not the least frightened. They were much too excited to think of danger.

* Although shooting a wild-hog on the plains would be considered as great a crime as shooting a fox in Leicestershire, it is lawful to do so on the hills, where the nature of the ground renders it impossible to ride after and spear them.

But their gallant attendants, the horsekeepers, had thought differently, and bolted, ponies and all, leaving the ladies to shift for themselves as best they could.

I shuddered as I examined the ground, and thought what a narrow escape they had made; for had the bear taken the upper pass, on which they were posted, nothing could have saved them.

As soon as we could get a few couple of hounds together we laid them on the track of the bear, and ran it up into the next ravine about a mile off. But here the scent became cold; the tired hounds could make it out no further; and so we lost him for the time.

Returning in a savage mood, I made a vow—as a melodramatic hero would render it—'To be revenged, or perish in the attempt.'

By dint of perseverance, and the willing aid of some neighbouring Cohatars—who had known this old bear for years as the terror of their village, and who also hungered after his flesh—I at last succeeded in getting the cunning brute marked down; and took his scalp before he was a week older.

I have no doubt my friends the Cohatars enjoyed the triumph over their enemy as much as I did, and made a jolly feast off his fat carcass.

I had almost forgotten to mention what the 'mulls' considered the great event of the day—my having killed the first woodcock of the season.

The woodcock being a rare bird—unknown, I believe, in any other part of India, unless he be found on the Himalayas; and I am not aware that he has been found even there—is

looked upon with much veneration, and diligently sought after by the slayers of 'feathered fowles,' who, when they have found him, rejoice exceedingly; and the fortunate sportsman who bags two couple in a day commands a leading paragraph in the public journals.*

The excitement occasioned by finding this first woodcock was intense.

Our smooth-bored guns being loaded with ball, the charge was speedily drawn, or fired off, and replaced with small shot; a supply of which is always carried by Madras sportsmen, in anticipation of some such exciting event as the flushing of a woodcock. The unfortunate bird, having been marked down into a small patch of brushwood, was immediately surrounded. A stone thrown into the thicket flushed him at once; and I—ungrateful sinner—after having borrowed my shot from a friendly 'mull,' fired first, and bagged him.

I felt a remorse of conscience at having thus, as it were, taken the bread out of the mouths of my eager friends; for I confess I did not rejoice in my victory as I ought to have done; but I could not help it.

On examining the bird (the 'mulls' have for once succeeded in giving a creature its proper name; for they *do* call it a woodcock), I found him to be identical in all respects with the woodcock of Europe; and, strange to say, they arrive

* Woodcock appear to be increasing on the hills. In my brother's journal, written some five years later, I find the following remark:—

"*2d November.*—All the people here are wild about woodcock-shooting. No other game is thought of at present. Strange taste, to prefer this child's play to the noble sport which may be had. There never was such a season for cocks. I remember some years ago it was considered a wonderful feat to bag twenty couple of cocks in a season, and the fortunate performer was quite a lion in his way. This year, any 'muff' who can shoot at all brings in three or four couple in a day."

and depart much about the same time as they do with us—coming in about the end of October, or beginning of November, and taking their departure again about the month of March. But whence they come, or whither they go, remains a mystery.

I know of no part of India nearer than the Himalayas (nearly 2000 miles distant), where a woodcock could find rest for the sole of his foot; and why this strange migratory bird should take so long a flight, for the sake of spending the winter in an isolated spot like the Neilgherry Hills—for it is a mere mountain island, surrounded by an ocean of burning plains—or how he ever found his way there, is more than my philosophy can fathom. But so it is.

CHAPTER XXII.

RETURN TO BANGALORE, AND MARCH TO MASULIPATAM.

Mrs. Reed (the Colonel's wife) having pretty well recovered her health, and our term of leave having nearly expired, we left the Neilgherry Hills early in November, and returned to Bangalore by the same route we had taken on our way up.

The first news we heard on our arrival at Bangalore was rather startling. It appears we have narrowly escaped a mutiny among the native troops, and a wholesale massacre of the European inhabitants, which (if the confession of the ringleaders may be relied upon) was to have resulted in a general rising among the native troops throughout India.

How far this may be true, I know not. At all events the proposed mutiny appears to have been well planned; and had it not been discovered in time, a fearful scene of carnage must have ensued.

A few days before our arrival, it had been discovered that a plot had for some time been hatching among the native troops to seize the fort of Bangalore, and put all the European inhabitants to death; and that many (if not the majority of the native troops) were found to have been implicated in the conspiracy.

The plot was discovered, the very day before the mutiny was to have broken out, by means of a loyal sepoy of the 9th Native Infantry, who had been tampered with; and, for the

sake of obtaining information, had pretended to join the mutineers. But no sooner had he made himself acquainted with their plans, than he reported the whole business to our Colonel (who happened at the time to be commandant of the station); and he—being fortunately a man of firm character and prompt action—took immediate steps to crush the mutiny in the bud.

The ringleaders were forthwith apprehended. The native guards were relieved by European troops, and the guards doubled. A report of what he had done was forwarded to the general officer commanding (who resided at the fort, two miles off); and, before noon, twenty-five or thirty of the principal conspirators were in custody, and the disaffected sepoys effectually check-mated.

A court of inquiry was ordered to assemble to investigate the case.

The conspirators, finding their game was up, acted as natives generally do on such occasions, and made a full confession.

It appears that the principal conspirator—a havildar of the 9th Native Infantry, and a Mohammedan, Tippoo by name—claimed to be a lineal descendant of the great Tippoo Sultan; and that, a short time before the mutiny was discovered, he had made a pilgrimage to Tippoo's tomb at Seringapatam; where, on rising from his devotions, he proclaimed aloud to the surrounding natives that ere long they should have another Tippoo on the throne.

In his confession, he seemed to take a pride in giving a detailed account of his well-laid scheme, the failure of which he deeply regretted. But it had been so written; and, like a good Mussulman, he submitted to his destiny without a murmur.

It had been so arranged that on the night of the proposed outbreak, he was to have had command of the native guard at the postern gate of the fort—the main gate being defended by an officer's guard of European troops.

In the middle of the night, he was to have thrown open the gate, and admitted a large body of mutineers, who were to be assembled in the neighbourhood of the fort. With this force at his command, he proposed to overpower the European guard ; storm the General's quarters, and put him to death ; and, having thus obtained possession of the fort, a gun was to have been fired as a signal for the work of death to commence throughout the cantonment, where the troops were quartered, about two miles from the fort.

On the signal being given, the Native Artillery were to have brought their guns—loaded with grape-shot—to play upon the barracks of the two European regiments—the 62d Foot and 13th Dragoons—so as to prevent the troops from turning out. Another party of native troops were to be in readiness to make a rush for the European cavalry lines, and to cut the horses loose ; and small parties were told off to make a simultaneous attack on the officers' bungalows—which are situated some hundred yards from the barracks on the opposite side of the parade-ground—and either to murder them in bed, or to cut them down in the event of their attempting to force their way out.

Tippoo further stated that he had given orders for the ladies to be spared. They were to be divided among the ringleaders ; and he had bargained that the General's wife—a remarkably handsome woman—should fall to his share.

The whole thing was well and judiciously planned ; and had it not been discovered in time, it is hard to say how it might have ended.

The conspirators were tried by their own countrymen—a court-martial of native officers—and, of course, found guilty.

Tippoo, and three other leading men, were sentenced to be blown away from guns; fifteen to be shot by musketry; and the remainder to be drummed out of the service, and transported for life.

The officer of the guard, whose duty it was to escort the prisoners to the place of execution, described the parting scene between Tippoo and his wife and children as very affecting.

His sentence had previously been announced to him. For the sentence of death he was prepared, and listened to it with calm composure; but when informed that he was to be blown from a gun, he slightly shuddered, remarking that he expected death, but not in this form. He, however, recovered himself immediately, remarking, "It is my destiny," and never again betrayed the slightest symptom of human weakness.

On his wife and children being admitted to the cell, the poor woman, uttering a shriek of agony, threw her arms round her husband's neck and sobbed hysterically; while the children —two noble-looking boys—embraced their father's knees, and wept bitterly, because they saw their mother weep, but without knowing why they did so.

Tippoo—too proud to evince any symptom of weakness before a European officer—stood erect, regarding his weeping wife and children with the steady eye of an Indian warrior about to be led to the stake.

"Weep not for me," he said. "I am about to go on a long journey, but hope to rejoin you soon."

Then pushing his wife gently aside, he kissed her and the children with intense fervour; and, dashing an unbidden tear

from his eye, he took his place among the other prisoners: and without trusting himself to bestow another glance on his wife and children, marched off with as firm a step and as proud an eye as if he had been going into action.

The execution was the most awful and imposing scene I ever witnessed, and one not easily forgotten.

The whole garrison—containing, no doubt, many would-be mutineers—was drawn up so as to form three sides of a square. On the third side, which was left open, were ranged five guns—twelve-pounders—loaded with a double charge of powder, and ready at a moment's notice to do their fatal work.

The prisoners, escorted by a strong guard, were marched into the centre of the square, halted, and ordered to stand at attention, while the sentence of the court-martial was being read.

Tippoo—a grand-looking fellow, upwards of six feet high, and about the handsomest man in the Madras army—advanced with the air of a prince, dignified, but not defiant. The other prisoners exhibited an almost equal contempt of death. But, instead of imitating the calm dignity of their leader, they gave vent to their feelings in ribbald jests—cursing the Christian dogs, and spitting at them in token of disgust and defiance.

It was a sharp morning—almost frosty—and while the sentence was being read, one of the prisoners, slapping his hands against his sides, shouted out to make haste and tie them up; for it was very cold, and he wanted to have it over as soon as possible.

As soon as the death-warrant had been read, Tippoo stepped out, and addressing himself to the men of his regiment, delivered his parting speech in a few pithy words, which are worth recording.

"Fellow-soldiers," he said, "I acknowledge the justice of my sentence, and am prepared to die. I took service under the accursed Feringees, who slew my ancestor Tippoo Sahib, and possessed themselves of his dominions. I did so for the purpose of seeking revenge. I have made the attempt, and I have failed. It was my fate. According to law, I have forfeited my life; and I give it freely. They can take my life; but they cannot destroy my spirit. This shall revisit the earth, and rouse my fellow-soldiers to action; and, ere long, you shall see the accursed Kaffirs driven from the land."*

The men who were sentenced to be blown away, were placed with their body in contact with the muzzle of the gun; their arms were lashed to the wheels, and their legs secured to two tent-pegs firmly driven into the ground. Those to be shot by musketry knelt in a row on one side of the guns, with a firing party to each man; and at the word "Fire," all were despatched at once.

The effect of the double-charged guns was tremendous. The body of the victims was blown into fragments, strewing the ground in front of the guns with portions of flesh, which were greedily pounced upon by hosts of kites and vultures. The heads were driven upwards, and the arms flew a hundred yards to the right and left; one of them falling so close in front of our regiment, that the men—well disciplined as they were—shrunk back to avoid its touching them.

* A prediction which was too nearly fulfilled during the late Indian mutiny. My belief is that the Mohammedan troops in India have always been disaffected; but, being in the minority, they 'bided their time,' till the issue of greased cartridges for the Enfield rifle gave them an opportunity of alarming the superstitious, jealous, and over-indulged Rajpoots, by impressing them with the idea that we intended to destroy their caste, by forcing them to use this unclean ammunition.

The other culprits were now brought forward, their uniforms stripped off, and ropes fastened round their necks, preparatory to drumming them along the line.

Notwithstanding the fearful scene they had just witnessed, these proud Mussulmans remonstrated loudly against this indignity.

"What have we done worse than others," they exclaimed, "that we should be thus treated like dogs? Why are we not shot like men?"

The ceremony of drumming out having been carried into effect, and the scattered remains of the other victims having been collected and piled together, the troops were marched past them in slow time; and so ended this military execution, which appears to have had a salutary effect for a time.

We remarked, as a curious circumstance, that Tippoo's head, although blown a hundred feet into the air, fell uninjured—so much so, that, being placed on the top of a pile of mangled limbs, it was recognised by all who passed, and remarked upon as wearing a smiling expression.

In the month of February, we received orders to march from Bangalore to Masulipatam—a march of two months through a country almost depopulated by famine, and in which cholera is raging.

The medical men have taken alarm, and predict fearful mortality among the troops, if we are marched by this route.

Our commanding officer forwarded their remonstrances to the Commander-in-Chief, requesting that we might be allowed to march to Madras, and proceed from thence by sea to Masulipatam.

Answer—"Soldiers have no business to remonstrate. Obey orders, and march according to route."

So, on the 17th of February, we were relieved by the

35th regiment from Australia, and commenced our march, which, as the medical men predicted, proved a most disastrous one.

My journal contains a daily record of this march; but to inflict this upon my readers, would be an act of cruelty little short of obliging them to perform the march themselves, so I shall only give a few extracts.

On the 26th February, at Goondacul, we received a visit from the Rajah of Punganore—quite a young man, very good-looking, but rather dark for a man of high caste. He rode out with the Colonel to see the evening parade. The regiment presented arms as he came upon the ground, and the band struck up a march—an unexpected compliment—which appeared to take the young gentleman by surprise, and rather flurried him. After parade he condescendingly dismounted from his horse, and was introduced to the officers, with each of whom he shook hands, and departed apparently much pleased with his visit.

On the 28th we descended the Palamanair Pass to Venketagerry. About half-way down the pass, a panther sprang from the jungle, on one side of the road, picked up a dog which was trotting along a little in front of the regiment, and disappeared on the other side like a flash of lightning.

A coolie, who was close to the dog, fancied the panther had sprung at him, and was nearly frightened into fits. He dropped his load, fell upon his face, and lay kicking and screaming till some one came to his assistance and picked him up.

On the 3d of March, at Kulgherry, the first case of cholera occurred. Three men and a woman attacked.

The collector of the district—Mr Roberts—called upon the Colonel, and in the course of conversation gave us an interest-

ing account of the inhabitants of the neighbouring hills—a wild and savage tribe, quite distinct from the inhabitants of the plains.

They have neither cattle nor crops, but live entirely by plunder, and are unmitigated savages.

He mentioned a curious instance of their barbarous customs which had come under his notice a few days ago.

An aged couple, who inhabited one of the hills, in solitude, like a pair of eagles, had an only son who wanted a wife; but finding it difficult to procure one for him, of their own caste, they concerted a plan to murder their next-door neighbour, who lived in a similar eagle-like fashion on the opposite hill, and to take possession of his wife; he being an elderly man, and his wife a fine strapping lass, just the sort of person their son wanted.

Accordingly, one fine day, they stepped across the glen, by way of paying a friendly visit to their neighbours; and after partaking of their hospitality, they coolly cut the old gentleman's throat, and walked off with his young wife.

The collector having been informed of this, immediately sent his peons in pursuit of the murderers; and, after some difficulty, they were captured.

On being examined, they, to the collector's astonishment, confessed their crime without hesitation. The men did not seem to consider it by any means an extraordinary occurrence. And the 'lady fair,' who had so lately been torn from the arms of her husband—after seeing him put to death in cold blood before her eyes—declared, with a laugh, that it was all fair play, and that the best man deserved to have her. She evidently thought that getting a young husband, instead of an old one, was not a bad exchange.

The poor woman—a sergeant's wife—who was attacked

with cholera this morning, died at 5 P.M., and was buried by torchlight three hours afterwards.

I, being the officer on duty, attended the funeral, and read the burial service over her remains. I shall never forgot that scene.

The uncoffined corpse, hastily sewed up in a sheet, lying on the edge of the grave—the face partially uncovered and dimly visible by the flickering torchlight—the heartrending lamentations of the distracted husband; six young children standing hand in hand, sobbing till their little hearts were ready to burst, gazing on their dead mother with awe-stricken eyes, and calling upon her in piteous accents not to leave them; the wailing of the women, and the stifled sobs of the men (for there was not a dry eye among them), formed the most heartrending scene I ever witnessed.

I managed, with difficulty, to get through the service with a tolerably firm voice. But when the first spadeful of earth fell upon the naked body, my feelings overcame me. I turned aside, and wept like a woman.

What must the feelings of her poor husband have been? He raved like a maniac, and it was with difficulty we prevented him from throwing himself into the grave.

The three men taken ill this morning died in the course of the night, and were left on the ground to be buried by the officer of the rear-guard.

So my journal goes on recording daily deaths and burials—too sad a tale to be repeated.

On the 5th of March five men were buried in the evening. On the 6th four men, a woman, and child, died in the course of the night, and were left to be buried. On the 7th, two men died on the line of march; they fell out, lay down on the roadside, and died then and there. Two others died

directly after we had reached our ground. One of these was rather a remarkable case. My colour-sergeant—a strong burly Irishman of the name of Murphy—had a great dread of cholera. On the line of march this morning, he walked alongside of my horse, and entered into conversation with me; making many apologies for the liberty he took in doing so. He said the horror of the scenes he had witnessed for the last few days had so preyed upon his mind, that he must relieve his feelings by talking to some one who could sympathise with him. He was prepared, he said, to shed his blood, and die on the field of battle like a man. But to lie down on the roadside, and die like a dog, as he had seen so many of his comrades do, was no death for a soldier; and the idea of it made him shudder.

I did what I could to cheer the poor fellow. I represented that, in taking this fatal march, we were doing our duty as soldiers, all the same as if we had been ordered to storm a battery; although I acknowledged the excitement was rather less, and the casualties about equal. In short, I recommended him to put his trust in providence, and not lose heart. And by the time we reached our ground, the poor fellow appeared to be in better spirits. He assisted me to pitch the tents, and I went to breakfast.

An hour afterwards I was sitting in front of the mess-tent—smoking my after-breakfast cheroot—when one of my serjeants marched up, and making a formal salute, reported—

"Serjeant Murphy is dying, sir, and wishes to see you."

"Serjeant Murphy dying!" I exclaimed. "He was helping me to pitch the tents only an hour ago!"

"So he was, sir. But he went into hospital five minutes afterwards, and the doctor says he is dying."

I rushed over immediately to the hospital-tent; but so

changed was poor Serjeant Murphy, in this short space of time, that I could not recognise him till he was pointed out to me. His ruddy healthy-looking face had collapsed, and assumed a livid hue; his eyes had sunk; and his hands were shrivelled up, like those of a washerwoman after a hard day's work. He was too far gone to speak; but he squeezed my hand, bestowed upon me a grateful look of thanks; and before the evening gun fired he was under ground.

I think the average mortality among the troops—for the native followers die by hundreds—is about four or five a day. One morning, when I happened to be officer of the rear-guard, I found thirteen bodies left upon the ground for burial. Rather a large proportion out of our small force of less than 500 men.

I now find my early Highland training stands me in good stead. Brought up from my infancy to contend against heat and cold, hunger and fatigue; a naturally strong constitution, and great flow of animal spirits, enable me to bear up under all difficulties; and whatever happens I console myself by thinking it might have been worse. So, notwithstanding the almost overpowering heat—the thermometer at this moment stands at 105° in my tent—I generally take a stroll with my gun, when not on duty, and manage to keep the mess pretty well supplied with game.

Fortunately I have no fear of infection. I visit the hospital-tent daily, and try to encourage the men by volunteering to assist them in carrying the dead; and I believe that this feeling, coupled with plenty of exercise—which few of my brother officers care to indulge in—has hitherto (under Providence) saved me from illness; for I have remarked that those who have the greatest dread of disease are the first to become its victims.

But, surrounded as we are by such scenes of death

and misery, no amount of animal spirits can prevent occasional fits of sadness and depression.

I was sitting in my tent one morning, almost overpowered by the suffocating heat of a scorching land-wind, suffering from premonitory symptoms of cholera, thinking of home, and wondering whether I should be spared to revisit it—with the Highland spirit pretty well knocked out of me—when the joyful tidings of a mail from England was announced.

This mail contained a letter from my dear mother; and strange to say, although not aware of the fatal march we had undertaken, she particularly called my attention to the ninety-first psalm, which she begged me to read with attention.

I immediately turned it up; and almost the first words that met my eye were—

"He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

"Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day.

"Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

"A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee."

This came to me like a message direct from heaven, and revived my drooping courage.

Two days afterwards I was attacked with cholera, which, had it come a few days sooner, might have proved fatal. But, with these blessed words of promise still ringing in my ears, I had no fear of death. I felt that this message, so opportunely sent, had not been sent in vain, and that I should be spared—and by the goodness of God I was spared.

So a loving mother's message, guided by the hand of Providence, probably saved my life.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MARCH TO MASULIPATAM—(*Continued*).

7th March.—To Curcumbaddy, 15 miles.—Another awful case of sudden death occurred to-day.

I was officer of the rear-guard. Johnston, our assistant-surgeon, who had dined at mess the evening before, in his usual health and spirits, was assisting me to see the camp ground cleared, when he was suddenly attacked with symptoms of cholera. The surgeon administered a dose of cholera medicine, put him into a palanquin, and desired the bearers to go their best pace, and overtake the regiment as quickly as possible. They did so in about two hours; but by this time the poor fellow was dead and stiff. He must have died almost immediately after leaving the camp-ground.

He was a nice, gentlemanlike little fellow, and is sincerely regretted by his brother officers. We buried him in the evening, with the usual military honours.

One of our men, whose wife died this morning, was attacked with cholera while attending her funeral, and was carried back to hospital in the same dooly in which his wife's body had been borne to the grave. He died in the course of the night, and was left next morning to be buried by her side.

A return of the bullock-drivers and tent-pitchers attached to the regiment, who have died, was made out yesterday; by which it appears that we have lost forty within the last four days.

The mortality among the other camp-followers is even greater, but no account is kept of them. I passed four of them this morning lying on the roadside, one dead, and the other three just expiring.

Such melancholy scenes have a sadly depressing effect on the men, who—in spite of all we can do to rouse them—are becoming utterly disheartened.

No longer is the merry laugh and cheerful song heard on the line of march. The men go plodding along wearily, with downcast looks and drooping figures—some poor fellow falling out of the ranks from time to time, and lying down to die—and nothing but weeping and lamentation for the dead is heard throughout the camp.

> "You may weep in your homes, in your fatherland,
> O'er a dying brother's bed;
> But you cannot mourn as our little band,
> In that desert mourned the dead."

And a desert it is. For the country is almost depopulated by famine; and at one village, where we proposed to halt, we found the ground so strewed with unburied corpses, that we had to move on a mile further to avoid pitching our camp among them.

The last two marches have been very severe, through loose sand, ankle-deep, and hot enough to cook an egg. Thermometer upwards of 100° in the shade. Several men died of sunstroke.

Wednesday, 13th.—Halted for a day at Wojellie. No deaths, and no fresh cases. Several officers—I among the number—have been attacked, and been at death's door; but hitherto poor Johnston's case has been the only fatal one. We begin to hope the pestilence is abating.

Thursday, 14th.—To Goodoor, 11 miles.—We have not

yet got rid of cholera. One man, a woman, and three children, died last night; and another man and a woman this morning.

Close to our camp we found fifteen or sixteen graves of the 45th regiment, which marched by this route a few months ago, and suffered from cholera as much as we are now doing. Most of these graves had been dug up by hyænas and jackals, and skulls and bones were scattered about in all directions. I suppose the remains of the poor fellows we have left behind will share a similar fate; for the ground is baked so hard by the excessive heat, that, even with the assistance of pickaxes, we could not manage to sink the graves beyond eighteen inches deep.

There is a fearfully hot wind blowing to-day, which has raised the thermometer to 107° Fahr. in the tents. It is almost too much for human nature to bear. It oppresses the breathing, parches up the skin, and makes the eye-balls burn. Articles of furniture in the tents are almost too hot to be touched; tables and chairs crack and split, and the covers of books curl up as if they had been held close to a fire. Even the horses and cattle appear to be overpowered by it; they refuse their food, and stand with their heads hanging down between their fore-legs, looking faint and miserable. When one recollects that a hot bath at 107° is hotter than one can bear, it seems hardly credible that Europeans should be able to exist in such a temperature.

Friday, 15*th*.—To Vencatachillum, 15 miles. We found the heat so oppressive yesterday that we marched this morning at 2 A.M., and reached our camping ground in good time, without any cases of sunstroke—no deaths. I being off duty, strolled out in the afternoon with my rifle, and brought home an old buck antelope, which proved an acceptable addition to our mess.

It is the fashion in this country rather to despise antelope venison, as being lean and dry, and this, I think, for two reasons. In the first place, the old bucks being exceedingly shy and difficult to stalk, the majority of the animals killed are does and young bucks, the flesh of which is decidedly inferior to that of an old one. And, in the second place, I have met with few people who, when they had got their buck, knew how to cook him. My own experience is that the haunch of an old buck, when properly cooked, never lacks customers; and I have seen a party of old gentlemen, who knew right well what good living meant, dine off it without touching anything else. If roasted alone it certainly is rather dry, although delicate and well flavoured. But just take the fat from the inside of a loin of good mutton, envelope the haunch in this, and roast them together, and if you do not find it 'an excellent good dish of meat'—as old Isaak Walton would call it—never ask me for another receipt. It must be an *old* buck, mind you; for the flesh of a doe, or young buck, is very deficient in flavour.

Nothing particular, except the usual mortality from cholera, till Friday the 22d, when we reached Alloor, and for the first time came within sight of the sea, distant about eight miles.

Although it was fearfully hot—the thermometer standing at 100° in the shade, and a hot wind blowing—I could not resist the temptation of going out after breakfast in pursuit of antelope, which are numerous hereabouts. I never got a more thorough roasting; and after much fruitless labour, returned to camp empty-handed, to be laughed at by my more prudent companions, who had remained at home. The excessive heat, reflected from a white sandy soil, caused such a mirage, that at a hundred yards an antelope could hardly be distinguished as such; and to judge distance was impossible.

The figure of the animal appeared to be raised several feet from the ground, hazy and indistinct, and in constant motion. It appeared as if viewed through an atmosphere of fine oil, constantly flowing upwards, and imparting a quivering motion to surrounding objects; and the consequence was, that although I got several good shots, I missed them all. At the distance of a mile or so the mirage produced a beautiful effect. The camp, which was pitched among a grove of palm trees, on a rising ground a little above the level of the surrounding plain, had exactly the appearance of being situated on a pretty little wooded island in the midst of a lake; the tents and trees were as distinctly reflected in the mirage as if they had actually been surrounded by water; and so perfect was the illusion, that had I not previously walked over the intervening ground, I could hardly have been persuaded that such was not actually the case.

Saturday, 23*d*.—To Jowaldinna, 9 miles.—Encamped near a small fishing village on the edge of a salt-water lagoon. As soon as the tents were pitched, Day, Evatt, and I went down to have a swim.

Day went in first, feet foremost, and was overhead close to the bank; he swam off into the middle of the stream, calling out to me that there was plenty of water, and that I had better take a header. Without staying to examine the state of the water for myself, I took a run and went in head-foremost. But, O horror!! instead of finding a fine clean bottom, as I expected, I dived my head and shoulders into about three feet deep of soft putrid mud, and came up as black as a negro, with my mouth, nose, and eyes, filled with this filthy compound. Day and Evatt, keeping well out of reach, laughed heartily at the success of their school-boy trick. I, utterly savage, went at them like a wounded hippo-

potamus, but failing to catch them, swam out further, where I found clear water, and a clean sandy bottom; and, having washed off the mud and wrath together, we had a pleasant swim after all, and returned to camp good friends, and with excellent appetites for breakfast.

One woman and a child died to-day; and, I regret to say, several fresh cases have appeared among the men. The disease, however, appears to be becoming less malignant; about one-half of the cases only prove fatal.

Sunday, 24th.—The medical men fancying this place to be unhealthy, we did not halt on Sunday, as usual, but made a short march of eight miles to Mawuldurroo, where we are to halt for a day instead.

We crossed the lagoon at a ford, about a mile above the camp, some two hours before daybreak; and the ford being rather an intricate one, men with torches were stationed on each side, all the way across, to keep us in the right track. It was a scene that would have rejoiced the heart of an artist.

The blazing torches reflected from the surface of the water, and flashing on the arms of the men, who marched across in steady military order; the snorting horses and frightened bullocks floundering after them; and the rabble-rout of camp-followers bringing up the rear; formed as picturesque a scene as I have ever witnessed.

I had a good opportunity of seeing it to advantage; for being in command of the advance-guard, I crossed first, and halted on a high bank overlooking the ford till the main body had passed. Many of the baggage bullocks, becoming restive, either lay down in the water or kicked off their loads; and tents, bullock-trunks, etc., were floating about in all directions, much to the discomfiture of their owners.

I felt thankful to Providence that I did not command the rear-guard this morning. The unfortunate wight who does so must have a sorry time of it.

Tuesday, 26th.—To Ramapatam, 12 miles.—Heavy sandy road. Country a dead level, dotted with single palm trees.

We are now on the sea-coast, and I feel it is new life to me once more to inhale the pure sea-breeze—my native air, I may say—for I was reared on the sea-coast, and am partly amphibious, though not web-footed, as the women of Greenock are said to be.*

After breakfast Graves and I walked down to the beach on an exploring expedition, and met two fishermen staggering along with a huge turtle slung on a pole between them. We asked them to sell it, but they refused to let us have it *at any price*, stating that it had been bespoke by the Rajah, to whom they were carrying it. I pulled out a couple of rupees, and told them they should have them if they carried it into our camp instead of the Rajah's palace. This *enormous bribe* (about four shillings) was more than these poor fellows could resist. The bargain was closed, the money paid, and the turtle honestly handed over to be dealt with by our mess-man.

Whether they procured another turtle for the Rajah is more than I can say. If not, we console ourselves by thinking that we have probably saved the old gentleman from a dangerous surfeit of turtle-soup, for which he ought to be grateful.

In the evening a large party of us again rode down to the beach, and amused ourselves by trying to ride, or rather swim, our horses through the surf. None of them, however, could

* The climate of Greenock is about the wettest in the west of Scotland; and it is a standing joke in the west country, that the women there, from constantly paddling about in the wet with bare feet, have become web-footed.

be induced to go beyond their depth, except Day's horse—an old native trooper—which swam through it like a water-dog, and came back all safe, having apparently enjoyed his bath.

Next day we cooked our turtle and had a grand feast, to which all the married officers, with their wives, were invited.

Bill of Fare—turtle soup, dressed turtle fins, turtle steaks, hashed turtle, and cold punch—all of which good things were done ample justice to.

Saturday, April 6th.—Halted for a day at Banpetta. Corfield and I went out to look for florican. In beating a patch of grass, we started a large wild boar.

Having no spear, and my gun being charged with small shot, we had no chance of killing him; but for a bit of fun, I mounted my horse, which was being led by one of the beaters, and rode after him.

I took him a ring of about four miles, and having succeeded in heading him, brought him back to the place from which we had started, pretty well blown.

Corfield had, in the meantime, mounted his horse, and armed himself with a great unwieldy sort of halbert, carried by one of the beaters.

My horse being nearly pumped out, and I unarmed, I shouted to Corfield to lay into the boar, which he did with his clumsy weapon. His horse being fresh was soon alongside of the boar; and now began a most exciting chase.

This being Corfield's first attempt at hog-hunting; and armed, as he was, with a weapon more like a harpoon than a hog-spear; he would have had but a sorry chase against a fresh boar.

But the brute being nearly exhausted, it was a pretty fair match—the boar, too much blown to charge, doing his best to

reach a patch of jungle within five hundred yards; and Corfield doing *his* best to head him off from it; in which attempt his violent-tempered horse narrowly escaped being thrown down several times, by the boar turning short under his nose.

A man mounted on a temperate horse, and armed with a manageable spear, might have had several opportunities of delivering a fatal thrust; but poor Corfield, although a good horseman, armed as he was, and having enough to do to keep his seat, and manage his horse—which, terrified by the savage demonstrations of the boar, bounded under him like a deer—had no chance. The boar beat him at last, and reached the cover. Corfield, in despair, hurled his unwieldy weapon after him, and wounded him in the hind-quarters, but not severely enough to stop him; and so he effected his escape.

We had great fun for some days afterwards, 'chaffing' poor Corfield about his vain attempt to *harpoon* a hog.

Dined with the Colonel, and met Mr. Dumergue, a young civilian, whom I had known previously at Bangalore, and who is at present on a tour of duty in this part of the country.

In the course of conversation, after dinner, I asked Dumergue how the government manage to raise any revenue from such barren land as this appeared to be—for we saw no signs of cultivation anywhere—and was astonished to learn that it not only paid well, but that the entire revenue was derived from taxes on salt and 'toddy' (the fermented juice of the palm-tree). The duty on salt alone, in this district, amounts to three lacs of rupees (about £30,000) per annum; and on each palm-tree, an annual tax of one rupee (about 2s.) is levied. How the poor devils of natives manage to make this answer, is more than I can understand.

I forgot to mention that there is a good public bungalow here, with a garden attached, where Dumergue had taken up

his temporary abode, but which he politely gave up to the Colonel and his wife.

I was strolling round the garden with Mrs. Reed after dinner, when we came suddenly upon a beautiful little monument of white marble, erected under the shade of a drooping tree—something like a weeping willow—and bearing this simple inscription :—

'TO LAURA.'

Here was a discovery, which Mrs. Reed's busy imagination immediately seized upon as the foundation for a touching and romantic story.

This monument had doubtless been erected by some unfortunate traveller, whose young wife, or favourite daughter, had been struck down by the hand of death ; and wishing to mark the spot where the remains of his beloved one reposed, without publishing her name to the rude gaze of every passing stranger, had designed this simple monument with its modest inscription. What good taste ! It was very touching. We became sentimental, and talked à la Sterne, while Mrs. Reed pulled out her sketch-book, and prepared to make a sketch for her journal.

We were so employed, when Dumergue joined us ; and seeing that Mrs. Reed admired the monument, he politely informed her that it had been erected by the collector of the district over a favourite spaniel, named 'Laura,' which had died here some years before.

What an upset to our romantic visions !

Poor Mrs. Reed was quite taken aback, and tearing the half-finished sketch out of her book, walked off to the bungalow without uttering a word.

Tuesday, April 9th.—To Vellatoor, on the right bank of the

Kistnah. The river is here divided into two branches by an island about three miles broad, across which we are to march to-morrow.

Wednesday, April 10th.—The regiment halts here to-day. But I, being next for duty, have been ordered to proceed this evening, with the heavy baggage, to the other side of the island, so as to have only one branch of the river to cross in the morning.

Rode out after breakfast with the Colonel to examine the bed of the river and the road across the island.

Found the bed of the river, which is nearly two miles wide, almost dry ; the stream being not more than 300 yards across, and fordable at low water. The road across the island not good; but passable.

Captain Buchan—our late adjutant—died to-day of apoplexy, brought on by excessive heat. The poor fellow had just obtained his company, and was about to retire from the service, after a long life of hardship and danger, to rest upon his laurels in his native land, when he was thus suddenly struck down.

He began his military career as a private, in the 71st regiment, in which he served throughout the Peninsular war. He was present at forty-seven engagements, and was fifteen times wounded. At the battle of Waterloo he was regimental sergeant-major. When the new system of drill was introduced, he was appointed drill-instructor to our regiment ; and became a great favourite among the officers. He shortly afterwards obtained an ensign's commission, and was appointed adjutant. Having gradually crept up to the rank of captain—the summit of his ambition—he was about to retire on half-pay, when his honourable and useful career was thus suddenly brought to a close.

At 3 P.M. I started with the heavy baggage, and got all safely across to the other side of the island before dark.

Thursday, April 11th.—The regiment arrived at my little encampment about 6 A.M., and having received my salute, forded the river and proceeded on their march.

I did not succeed in getting the baggage and camp-followers across the stream before noon ; and then had a tough job to work my way across two miles of deep sand to the opposite bank. I reached the camp, late in the afternoon, completely knocked up by the excessive heat, rendered more oppressive by the glare of the white sand—which was heated to such a degree as to be quite painful to the feet—and almost famished, having started without breakfast, or even a cup of coffee.

I was greatly amused, while crossing the river, by watching the soldiers' wives, and remarking the different ways in which they effected the transit. The water was deep enough to reach to their waist, and the stream too rapid to admit of their being carried—if indeed they could have found volunteers to carry them. So there was nothing for it, but to wade through, clothes and all; or to 'clew up tacks and sheets'—as a sailor would say—high enough to keep them clear of the water. Some of the more modest nymphs adopted the former plan ; but by far the greater number 'clewed up' gallantly, and waded across in dry clothes, in spite of the laughter and coarse jests of the soldiers.

The way in which they managed this was rather ingenious. On first entering the water, they pulled up their petticoats to their knees, and as the water deepened, gradually 'hoisted away' till, by the time their clothes were tucked under their arms, they were up to their waist in water, and 'quite decent.' As the water gradually shoaled, they, in

like manner, 'lowered away handsomely,' and by the time they reached land, were decently clothed again.

In riding my horse across, I had occasion to pass a group of these mermaids, and was wicked enough to make some remark on the display of handsome legs. This had the effect of making most of them drop their petticoats, like a shot, much to the amusement of their companions, who were already wet, or had got dry across. But there was one lady —a strapping Tipperary lass—who was too old a soldier to be bullied by such chaff.

"Troth thin, your honour," she replied, with a good-humoured grin; "you're not far wrong there. It's good legs I've got, sure enough; and it's myself that's not ashamed to show them." And neither she was.

Friday, April 12th.—To Mullavoll, 8 miles.—We killed two jackals on the line of march this morning. One was coursed and killed by Corfield's greyhounds. The other I wounded with the rifle, and after a good gallop, rode him down, and finished him with my sword. I was rightly served, for indulging in such school-boy tricks, by losing my scabbard during the run; and was obliged to parade next morning with a naked blade stuck in my belt, much to the amusement of the men.

Saturday, April 13th.—Marched into Masulipatam, and encamped on the swamp outside of the fort, where we remain till Monday, when the 45th Regiment, which we relieve, will give over the quarters to us.

Several officers of the 45th came to meet us, and invited most of our people to breakfast. I breakfasted with a Mr. Nott, a capital fellow, who appeared thoroughly to understand the marching appetite of hungry subalterns. Beefsteak, curried prawns, fish, eggs, and omelets, with light

French claret, cold as ice, graced his hospitable board. And, by the beard of the Prophet, we did ample justice to the good things provided for us.

In the evening, we dined at the mess of the 45th.

Monday, April 15th.—The mess-house was handed over to us, and we gave a parting dinner to the 45th.

Tuesday, April 16th.—The 45th marched out at gunfire, en route to Hyderabad, and we took possession of the fort.

So ends our march to Masulipatam, and may the gallant 'Wiltshire Springers' never have to undertake such another.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MASULIPATAM.

We all know there are plenty of unhealthy stations in India, to which choice specimens of the surplus population of Great Britain and Ireland—carefully selected by our recruiting sergeants, and passed by our staff surgeons as wholesome '*food for powder*'—are annually exported, at an enormous expense, to be used up, too often needlessly, as *food for worms.* But of all places hitherto selected for the rapid and useless expenditure of Her Majesty's troops, I believe Masulipatam has been found the most efficacious.

There are cases—in time of war—where such a sacrifice of human life becomes necessary, and then no one grumbles. But as none of us can see the necessity—in time of peace—for quartering European troops in such a pestilential spot as this; we, believing ourselves to be good food for powder, naturally feel indignant at being thus used up, in a reckless and extravagant manner, as food for worms; and we growl accordingly.

But growling avails not, so we must just grin and bear it.*

The fort was originally built by the Dutch, on a site (a patch of dry ground, surrounded by a dismal swamp) which

* Things are better managed now, and unhealthy quarters for troops avoided as much as possible. I believe we were the last European regiment quartered in the Fort of Masulipatam.

no living creature but a Dutchman, a frog, or an alligator, would ever have selected for his habitation.

On the mainland—opposite the fort—stands the native town; above which, on dry sandy soil, comparatively healthy, the native troops and civilians are quartered in a well-built cantonment.

But the fort being a fort—although half in ruins, and I believe utterly useless—it is considered necessary to garrison it with European troops; and so, for the sake of military etiquette, we are sent here to die like rotten sheep; although, in the event of our being called upon to defend the place, we could hardly muster 100 men fit to bear arms.

Our entry into this dismal place—from which few returned alive—was anything but a triumphal procession. At least half the men were *carried* in; some in doolies, some in blankets slung upon poles, and those who were well enough to bear the motion, in hospital waggons—a melancholy procession.

There was gloom upon every countenance; for every one had suffered either in his own person, or in his family; and a nearer approach to the place, in which those who survived were destined to spend the next twelve months, in no wise tended to dispel this gloom.

From the native town our route lay across the swamp, on a raised causeway, upwards of two miles long; and—in the rainy season at least—forming the only practicable approach to the fort, on entering which you feel as if cut off from all communication with the outward world. And so indeed, in the hot season, you virtually are; for with the thermometer standing at 110° in the shade, and with a hot wind blowing from the desert—sweeping before it clouds of black dust, which parches up the lungs, and almost causes suffocation—few men are found rash enough to brave the fiery blast for

the sake of holding intercourse with their fellow-creatures on the mainland.

The fort is surrounded by a broad ditch filled with a few feet of water and several feet of putrid mud, into which the tide ebbs and flows; the mud, at low water, exhaling pestilential vapours. This ditch is fed by a muddy creek, extending inland from the sea—which is about two miles distant—and washes the rear of the fort, where—at high water—flat-bottomed boats can discharge their cargoes. But, at low water, the receding tide leaves exposed a filthy mass of mud, which by no means improves the salubrity of the atmosphere.

The buildings inside of the fort, designated barracks, and officers' quarters, are wretched half-ruined buildings, overrun by rats, bandicoots, and other vermin. Here and there a wretched specimen of tropical vegetation—a palmira, or cocoa-nut tree, or some hardy jungle-thorn—makes feeble efforts to raise its stunted head above the walls, as if vainly seeking for a breath of fresh air; but with singularly bad success. They are all evidently in an advanced stage of consumption.

Between us and the sea still extends the apparently interminable swamp—at this season, a plain of dry black mud and sand, over which we can ride, but in the rainy season a sheet of stagnant water; the only object which breaks the monotony of the view being a burying-ground, contributing its mite to the desolation of the scene.

Verily it requires a stout heart and a sanguine temperament to enable one to keep up his spirits and 'feel jolly' in the midst of such a landscape; and yet I received a visit, on the morning after our arrival, which made me laugh in spite of myself.

My visitor was a respectable-looking half-caste gentle-

man, dressed in a 'genteel' suit of black, and a white tie. Advancing with the grave melancholy smile and obsequious air of a well-bred undertaker, he unrolled before my astonished eyes a neatly-drawn plan of a new cemetery, which has lately been erected—the margin ornamented with a few chaste designs for monumental urns, tombstones, etc.—and begged to know whether I would like to select, for my private use, a remarkably picturesque spot to which he called my attention. He had this, and a few other desirable lots, still to dispose of, which he could afford to let me have at a moderate price; but as they were in great demand, it would be advisable to secure one in time.

There was something so absurdly like a burlesque on a real tragedy, in being thus gravely invited to select and pay for my last resting-place before I had been twenty-four hours in the pest-house, that I could hardly refrain from laughing in the man's face.

I thanked him very much for his polite attention; but informed him that, being an officer in his Majesty's service, a grateful country, in consideration of my valuable services, had guaranteed, in the event of my demise, to put me under ground free of expense, and with military honours; otherwise I might have been tempted to invest in the very desirable little property to which he had been good enough to call my attention.*

August.—We have now been quartered in Masulipatam for nearly four months, living literally in the midst of pestilence and famine.

Our unfortunate regiment is dreadfully cut up. Several officers, who managed to struggle through the march, have

* The account of this interview, absurd as it may appear, is not exaggerated. It occurred just as I have described it.

succumbed at last to the malaria and depressing influence of this dreadful place, and now rest from their labours in the new cemetery. We have not a single man fit for duty, so that the guards have to be furnished by native troops.

Corfield and I are the only two officers not on the sick-list, and are hard worked accordingly; although we have no men of our own to command, we are still obliged to take our tour of duty on the main-guard with native troops—hardly fair play we think; and as there must be an orderly officer, we have also this regimental duty to perform every second day.

The main-guard duty is what we dread most; for to the main-guard-room, which overhangs the pestilential ditch, the medical men have traced almost all the fatal cases which have occurred—almost every officer who mounted guard having been attacked with symptoms either of cholera or dysentery.

The first time I mounted guard I was almost immediately attacked with premonitory symptoms. Something within me suggested port wine as a remedy—port being a wine rarely used in India, and which I had not tasted since I landed; but on this occasion nature craved for it. I accordingly sent to the mess for a pint bottle of port, which I swallowed at a draught; and so immediate was the relief it afforded, that I never afterwards mounted guard without repeating the dose. Corfield, by my advice, adopted the same system; and the result is that he and I are now the only two officers fit for duty.

For some time after our arrival cholera still continued to hang about us; and no sooner did this cease than we were attacked with dysentery in its worst form. The doctor says that, in all his experience, he has never seen the disease assume so malignant a type; and that unless he succeeds in

mastering it within the first twelve hours, nothing can save the patient. The disease generally runs its course in twenty-four hours, and few patients survive it over thirty-six hours. It proves even more fatal than cholera.

We have never had less than 100, and from that to 150 men in hospital, since we arrived; and so great has been the mortality, that the surgeon has requested the Colonel to let the dead be buried quietly, without music or firing, as the almost daily repetition of the dead-march has a very depressing effect on the patients in hospital.

To add to our misery, the surrounding country is in a state of famine, in consequence of the crops having failed last year for want of rain; and the scenes of misery we are daily forced to witness are too dreadful for description. No one, unless he has seen a country in an absolute state of famine, can conceive the horrors occasioned by such a state of things.

The famine extends over a great part of the Madras Presidency. The Europeans throughout the country have subscribed liberally to feed as many of the poor starving wretches as possible; and by this means ten thousand are fed daily in Masulipatam alone. But this, after all, is merely a drop in the ocean. Ten times that number are still famishing, and hundreds die daily, literally of starvation. The swamp around the fort is found each morning strewed with the bodies of those who have perished during the night; and although a strong body of police are constantly employed in collecting the dead, and throwing them into a huge pit prepared for the purpose, they cannot succeed in keeping the ground clear, and numbers of bodies are left to be devoured by dogs and vultures.

The description in the 'Siege of Corinth' of the dogs

gnawing human skulls, is mild compared to the scenes of horror we are daily forced to witness in our morning and evening rides. It is no unusual sight to see a group of vultures tearing at a human body not yet cold—the blood still flowing from the eyeless sockets—and the other morning I saw a gaunt wolf-like dog running off with the entire body of a little child in his mouth.

It is dreadful to see what revolting food human beings may be driven by famine to partake of. Dead dogs and horses are greedily devoured by these starving wretches; and the other day an unfortunate donkey having strayed from the fort, they fell upon him like a pack of wolves, tore him limb from limb, and devoured him on the spot.

Soon after our arrival the usual hot winds set in with more than their usual violence, and the heat became something beyond what I could have conceived. Doctor Radford, who has been fifteen years in India, says that till now he never knew what real heat meant. For the last two months the thermometer has hardly ever fallen below 110° in the house, even at midnight; for during the time the hot wind lasts the heat is pretty much the same night and day; and the doctor assured me the other day that in the hospital he found the thermometer up to 120°!—a degree of heat hardly credible, and almost intolerable. Fortunately this excessive heat only lasts for about three months, otherwise Masulipatam would be quite uninhabitable.

August 24th.—I am thankful to say Government has at length come to the conclusion that something must be done to save the regiment from utter annihilation. The Commander-in-chief is still obdurate; and in spite of our urgent intreaties, and the grave remonstrances of our medical officers, obstinately refuses to remove us from hence; but he has relented

to this extent, that a ship has been chartered, in which the convalescent, who are sufficiently strong to embark, are to be sent to sea to cruise for a month or six weeks, in hopes that the sea air may restore them. It will do them good, no doubt; but I fear most of the poor fellows are too far gone ever to recover their health.

The ship chartered is the 'Abberton,' of 600 tons, and she is expected to arrive in a few days.

I, not being an invalid, although feeling sadly in want of a breath of fresh air, had little hope of being able to get a berth on board; but happening to be dining with the Colonel when the good news of the expected ship arrived, I ventured to suggest, in a half joking manner, that I thought it rather a rash proceeding to send a ship to sea with a whole cargo of invalids, and without one officer, at least, in sound health to look after them.

"One word for them and two for yourself, young gentleman," replied the Colonel, smiling good-humouredly; "for if I mistake not, you are about the only sound officer I have remaining. Would you like to go?"

"That I would, sir!" I replied, joyfully. "You know I am partly amphibious, and enjoy a cruise more than anything in the world."

"Well, so be it," replied the Colonel, kindly; "you have heretofore done your work like a man, and although you have not yet broken down under it, a cruise on your 'native element,' as you call it, will do you good; so be off and pack up your kit, for the ship may arrive at any moment."

You may be sure I did not wait to be bidden twice; but, thanking the Colonel heartily, I rushed off to make my preparations, with a lighter heart than I have felt for many a long day.

CHAPTER XXV.

A CRUISE TO THE NICOBAR AND ANDAMAN ISLANDS.

Masulipatam, Monday, August 26th.—Our ship, the 'Abberton,' has arrived, and the orders are to embark to-morrow.

Our party consists of the Colonel's wife (Mrs. Reed) ; our surgeon (Dr. Radford), with his wife and child ; Captain Short, and Lieutenants Day and Pender ; our assistant-surgeon (Dr. Maxwell), and 150 men.

Captain Short being an advanced convalescent—what a Tweed fisherman would call 'a weel-mended kelt'—and senior officer, nominally takes command of the party ; but I, as second in command, virtually do the duty. Dr. Radford, being on the sick list, the assistant-surgeon (Maxwell) is in charge of the sick.

Our captain (Mr. Shuttleworth) has been on shore to report himself, and receive his orders.

Our orders are to go to sea, and cruise in the Bay of Bengal, or elsewhere, for six weeks ; the officer in command of the troops having a roving commission to go where he chooses—subject, however, to the approval of the captain, who, being responsible for the safety of his ship and crew, may object to undertake any intricate or dangerous navigation.

The idea of thus going to sea for a six weeks' cruise, in a 600-ton *yacht*, with an experienced seaman as sailing-master, rejoiced my heart ; and knowing how important it is, on a long cruise, to be on friendly terms with your captain—or, in this

instance, 'sailing-master'—I invited Captain Shuttleworth to partake of a friendly glass of grog in my quarters, and talk the matter over.

Here, with a chart of the Bay of Bengal spread out before us, we gravely discussed the important subject of our route.

I have always had a great longing to visit the Nicobar and Andaman Islands, and proposed that we should do so.

The captain rather demurred. He had never visited either of these groups of islands; the navigation among the Nicobars is intricate, and, without the aid of an experienced pilot, dangerous; and the inhabitants of the Andamans being unmitigated savages, and reputed cannibals, he did not much fancy going among such 'darned niggers.' I managed, however, to overrule his objections; and it was finally decided that my plan should be adopted.

Tuesday, 27*th*.—I embarked with the men, and got the poor fellows made as comfortable as circumstances would permit. The water on this coast is so shallow that a ship of 600 tons cannot approach nearer than about seven miles; and, when viewed from the shore, appears 'hull down.'

We embarked in large flat-bottomed boats, which were punted out—that is, pushed along with poles—till we were within a mile of the ship, when, the water becoming deeper, the crew took to their oars, and pulled their unwieldy crafts alongside—a very tedious mode of progression.

Wednesday, 28*th*.—Mrs. Reed, the Radfords, Short, and the other officers, came on board; but we were prevented from sailing immediately in consequence of the doctor having ordered some of the men who had embarked to be sent back and exchanged for others. The Colonel and several other officers dined with us, and went on shore in the evening.

The poor Colonel requires change of air as much as any

of us ; but, being commandant of the station, he is too zealous a soldier to leave his post.

Thursday, 29*th*.—Up anchor at daybreak. The good ship 'Abberton' very slow in getting under weigh.

Although I am not a sailor by profession, I know enough of nautical matters to be aware whether a ship is smartly handled or not ; and the way in which our ship was handled on this occasion led me to the conclusion that our gallant skipper is a bit of a lubber. And so he proved to be. But I was glad to find, on further acquaintance, that, except on state occasions, he rarely attempted to work the ship himself, leaving this duty to his first mate, a smart little fellow, and a thorough good seaman.

First part of the morning nearly a dead calm. At 8 A.M. a breeze sprang up which soon carried us out of sight of land; and before sundown, we were bowling along merrily with a stiff breeze from S. by W.

Friday, 30*th*.—Wind S. by W., strong breezes and heavy swell. Overtook and spoke a small French brig bound for Pondicherry. At 2 P.M. spoke the ship 'Spartan,' bound to Calcutta, having sailed from Liverpool on the 13th April.

Poor Mrs. Reed still suffering from sea-sickness ; the others doing well, and beginning to have regular salt-water appetites.

Saturday, 31*st*.—Blowing fresh, with sharp squalls ; a case of double-reefed topsails ; not so much swell as we had yesterday.

Sunday, Sept. 1*st*.—Squally, with heavy rain, which prevented our having divine service on deck.

During the 2d and 3d, squally weather, with heavy showers.

Wednesday, 4*th*.—At 12 o'clock noon, made the island of Carnicobar, the northernmost of the Nicobar group.

The captain, having never been here before, and having no pilot, stood in shore as far as he could venture, and then coasted along in search of a safe anchorage. A heavy sea on, with sharp squalls and alternate calms; so kept the ship under easy sail. There was a strong current running in the opposite direction to the wind, which knocked up a nasty cross sea. The ship laboured much, particularly during the lulls, when she pitched her bows under water, and once or twice took in water through the stern-ports. At 5 P.M. we doubled a rocky point in the midst of a tearing squall, accompanied by such heavy rain that we could not see the land, although it was within 500 yards of us; and just as the squall cleared up, we rounded-to cleverly in a snug little sheltered bay in the N.W. end of the island.

"Stand by the anchor, forward, there."

"All ready, sir."

"Let go." Whirr! splash! away went 25 fathoms of chain cable; and the good ship 'Abberton' lay 'as snug as a duck in a mill-pond' in 10 fathoms water, and within 300 yards of the coral beach.

Abreast of us was a snug little cluster of huts, peeping out from among a grove of cocoa-nut trees, and looking picturesque exceedingly.

We had hardly got the sails furled before two canoes full of natives came off to us; and, resting on their paddles within about five yards of the ship, threw some cocoa-nuts into the chains, at the same time making signs of friendship; but they would not venture to approach nearer, although we showed them some tobacco, hatchets, beads, and other articles to tempt them. On my going over the side to pick up the cocoa-nuts they had thrown into the chains, they appeared to

be seized with a sudden panic, and paddled off, jabbering like a lot of frightened monkeys.

As far as we could see, the natives appear to be a fine tall race of men, of a dark copper colour, but ridiculously fat—particularly about the breasts—so much so, that on first seeing them we mistook them for women; the more so, that the men wear their hair long, parted in the middle, and hanging over their shoulders; whereas, as we afterwards ascertained, the women have their hair cropped close to their heads—a very unbecoming style of 'coiffure.'

The men go entirely naked, with the exception of a narrow strip of blue cotton cloth, not more than two inches wide, which, after being wound round the loins, is passed between the legs, and fastened in the girdle behind; a yard or two of the strip of cotton being allowed to trail upon the ground, like a tail—he who can display the longest tail being considered the best dressed man.*

They have no trace of beard or moustache. Their features are as hideously ugly as can be well conceived; their teeth are jet black, and their great gaping mouths and lips are stained blood-red from chewing betel-nut. This, with their savage looks and gestures—to say nothing of their long tails—gives them a ferocious and animal-like appearance.

Their canoes are well shaped and neatly finished. They

* Apropos of tails, I find in the 'Asiatic Researches,' vol. iii. page 151, the following note to a paper on the Nicobar Islands, affording a curious example of the *sort* of foundation upon which even the most marvellous tales of ancient travellers are generally found to rest:—

"A traveller named Keoping, a Swede, who sailed to the East Indies in a Dutch ship, in the year 1647, and anchored off the Nicobar Islands, relates, *that he discovered men with tails, like those of cats, and which they moved in the same manner*"—as cats—I suppose, he means.

are formed by hollowing out the trunk of a tree. They have a high ornamented prow, and are steadied by an out-rigger without which they have not sufficient stability to float upright. They are propelled by short light paddles; and as they do not draw more than a few inches of water, they shoot along with wonderful rapidity. They are of all sizes, from six, to thirty or forty feet in length.

The island is covered with cocoa-nut palms, and other trees, growing down to the water's edge. The effect is very picturesque, and, with the groups of canoes manned by savages in the foreground, brought vividly to my recollection certain coloured prints of Cook's Voyages, which used to be the wonder and admiration of my childhood.

On consulting that valuable book, 'Horsburgh's Sailing Instructions,' we find the inhabitants of the Nicobar Islands described as being, some of them, openly hostile to strangers, others apparently friendly, but all of them more or less treacherous. As we do not yet know to which of these classes our satanic-looking friends with the tails may belong, we have taken the precaution to guard against surprise by mounting sentries with loaded arms, one at each gangway, and two others on the poop and forecastle.

This I consider a proper and necessary precaution. But I think our 'skipper' has made a mistake in firing a carronade—which he did at sunset—to show that his ship is armed.

If the natives prove hostile, we can surely hold our own against them without making so much noise about it; and if they are friendly, this demonstration of physical force will only tend to frighten them, and make them suspicious.

Thursday, 5*th*.—It is as I expected. The natives appear to have been frightened by our warlike demonstrations. No

canoes came off to us this morning, nor were any natives seen upon the beach.

Having waited till about noon, without seeing any signs of life upon the island, a party of us went on shore in one of the ship's boats, armed of course, but showing a white flag—a sign of friendship, which I believe is understood by all savages.

Presently two or three natives emerged from the woods, and approached us cautiously, making friendly signs. We, having laid down our arms, went forward to meet them, shook hands with them cordially, and having presented them with some tobacco, and a few empty bottles, we were soon on the most friendly terms. After a deal of talking and shaking of hands, they conducted us with much ceremony to their huts, each of them leading one of us by the hand. Here we were soon surrounded by natives, bringing shells, fruit, pigs, poultry, yams, etc., which they bartered for tobacco, old cutlasses, knives, nails, empty bottles, and fish-hooks; and a brisk trade was soon established. They did not appear to care for beads, and set little value on rupees, which they only use as ornaments to hang round their necks. I found I could get more for a leaf of tobacco than for a rupee. What they appear to value most is a cutlass; for an old rusty blade, which had been condemned as unserviceable, the captain got five fine hogs. Our visitors were at first clamorous for tobacco; but finding that after the first civilities had passed we were determined to give 'nothing for nothing,' they left off begging, and never asked for tobacco nor anything else without offering an equivalent in exchange. The only disagreeable part of the interview was being obliged to shake hands with each new comer—a ceremony which they would on no account dispense with.

We saw neither women nor children. I suppose they

have been sent inland to be out of harm's way, in the event of our not proving friendly visitors.

We found two or three men among the natives who could speak a little English. The little they knew, having been picked up from the crews of ships which occasionally touch here for cocoa-nuts or water, is not exactly 'Queen's English,' and is pretty strongly spiced with 'strange oaths;' but it answers the purpose and proves useful.

The best educated man, in this respect, was a consequential-looking fellow, who introduced himself to us as 'Captain Macintosh.' On his head he wore an old glazed sailor's hat; the only other piece of clothing he possessed was a ragged blue jacket, rather a tight fit, and decidedly short as to the sleeves. All below this—with the exception of a tail, long enough to distinguish him as a 'swell' of the first water—was 'beauty unadorned.' One could not help fancying the gentleman had begun to dress himself at the wrong end. Swaggering up to me with a strut that made his tail wag in a graceful manner, he seized my hand, and giving me a hearty slap on the shoulder, exclaimed—

"Ah! Jack, ma boy, how you do? D—d glad see you—I you friend—you ma friend. D— my eye, that all right—eh?"

The natives do not appear to have any distinction of rank among themselves, except that of 'Captain;' a title assumed by all those who have a smattering of English, and of which they appear not a little proud.

After seeing all that was to be seen about the village, I took my rifle and strolled two or three miles inland to explore the country, escorted by two natives, for no one of them would venture to accompany me alone. At first, we were mutually suspicious of each other, the natives marching one on each side of me, naked cutlass in hand—looking very much as if

they were escorting a prisoner; and I, with a brace of pistols in my belt, carrying my rifle at full cock, ready for action at a moment's notice.

This feeling of suspicion, however, soon wore off; and one of my friends, who spoke a little English, and called himself 'Captain Norris,' became so familiar that, after slapping me on the back, and assuring me that he was my friend, he ended by whipping a cheroot out of my mouth and taking a pull at it without saying 'by your leave.'

The island, as far as I could judge—for I am no geologist—appeared to be entirely composed of coral. The country, as far as my walk extended, was clothed with dense forest-jungle, intermixed with patches of long grass, and traversed by well-marked footpaths, leading probably from one village to another. The trees swarmed with pigeons of various kinds, but I met with no other birds, except minas. I saw numbers of wild pigs; but these the natives requested me not to shoot, as they are, with the exception of a few domestic dogs and poultry, the only live stock on the island, and form their principal article of food.

In the neighbourhood of the villages these pigs become half domesticated, being regularly fed with cocoa-nuts, which are cut down, split in two, and left upon the ground for their use. In the interior, however, they are quite wild, and when disturbed, start away with a savage grunt, like the wild boar of the mainland. They are, however, quite a distinct animal from the true wild hog, being of various colours, and formed exactly like the domestic pig, to which animal they evidently owe their origin. The tusks of some of the males are of an enormous size—twice as long as those of any wild boar—but so much curved that their points turn downwards, thus rendering them useless as offensive weapons. The cocoa-nut diet

seems to agree with them, for they become enormously fat, and the pork is the finest flavoured I have ever tasted. The way in which the natives kill them is by watching behind a tree, and spearing them as they come to feed on the cocoa-nuts, which have been purposely placed within easy throwing distance. They must also have some method of taking them alive, as numbers of live pigs were brought in for barter, with their legs tied together, and slung upon a bamboo.

The jungle is composed of large forest trees—some of which are of an enormous size—intermixed with cocoa-nut, lime, orange, citron, cashew-nut, and other fruit trees, growing in the greatest profusion. Pine-apples are also met with, and yams are plentiful, but all grow in a state of nature; the natives being either ignorant of the art of agriculture, or too lazy to practise it.

On our return to the village the natives crowded round me, eager to examine my rifle, and requested me to fire it off that they might see the effect. I accordingly discharged it at an old canoe, which was lying on the beach about 100 yards from the huts, and great was their astonishment when, on going to examine it, they found that the bullet had passed through both sides.

My friend, Captain Norris, appeared to be rather frightened at the idea of having trusted himself in the company of a man armed with so formidable a weapon; and coming up to me, with an hysterical giggle—between a laugh and a cry—patted me on the back, exclaiming—

"That all fun, eh? I your friend—you my friend!—No make fright!—No make kill—eh?"

I returned the friendly pat, assuring him that it was all fun, that I considered him a capital fellow; in fact my most particular friend: and to set his mind at rest gave him the

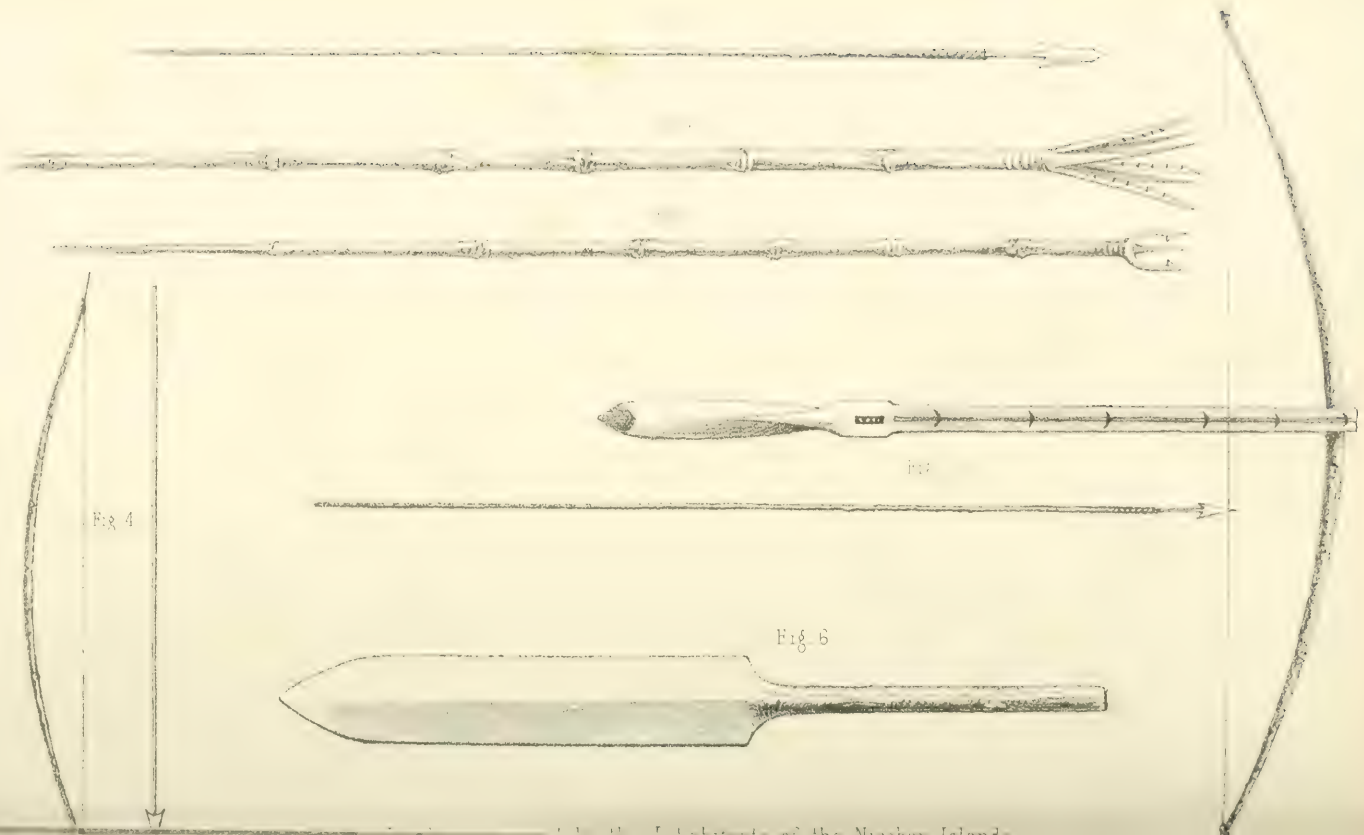
Fig 4
Fig 5
Fig 6

discharged rifle to carry. This mark of confidence quite reassured him, and he led me back to the huts, carrying the rifle over his shoulder, grinning with delight, and patting me on the back all the way.

In the evening we were astonished by seeing a European coming off to the ship in a native canoe. He proved to be the master of a small brig which had come to the island to trade for cocoa-nuts, and having heard of our arrival he had paid us a visit for the purpose of obtaining some medicine. He informed us that our present anchorage was not a safe one at this season, and advised us to move round to the other side of the island where his vessel lay. This we intend to do as soon as we have got our water on board.

Friday, 6th.—All hands employed getting water on board. The natives very obliging, assisting the men to fill the casks, and roll them down to the boats. Rather a heavy surf on the beach, which renders this operation somewhat difficult.

The ladies intended to have landed to-day, but were afraid to venture through the surf; so we went on shore without them; and it was as well we did so, for both our boats were nearly swamped, and one of them had her bottom stove in.

We found a large assemblage of natives at the village, all eager to barter their little stock of goods for tobacco, knives, cutlasses, etc., and a brisk trade was soon established. The captain purchased a good supply of hogs, yams, and fruit, for sea stock; and the officers invested largely in shells, coral, ambergris, tortoise-shell, spears, bows and arrows, and other curiosities.

We shot a number of pigeons, which we found excellent eating. I observed four varieties, all different from those found on the mainland. The only one I have been able to identify is the Nicobar pigeon (*Columba Nicobarina*), a very

handsome bird, about half as large again as our common wood-pigeon; the plumage a brilliant golden green, with metallic lustre, and the neck clothed with long hackles like those of a cock. Another beautiful variety—which, from its small size, I take to be a species of turtle-dove—is of a rich chestnut brown, marked with black bars, not unlike the plumage of a woodcock. Besides the pigeons, I observed numbers of a yellow species of thrush—known in India as the mango-bird—and a beautiful variety of the mina, several of which the natives brought for sale in neatly-made wicker cages. We also saw a few paroquets, but no monkeys, nor any other animal, except the wild pigs before mentioned.

Among the fruits and vegetables bought for sale, were cocoa-nuts, yams, bananas, papais, shaddocks, citrons, oranges, lemons, limes, pine-apples, cashew-nuts, betel-nuts, chillies, and sugar-cane.

The natives, thus liberally supplied by the hand of nature with not only the necessaries, but many of the luxuries of life—and this without any labour on their part—are, as might be expected, fat, indolent, and luxurious. Eating, drinking palm-wine, smoking, and sleeping, appear to be their only occupations. Their food consists of pork—of which they can always command an unlimited supply—yams, cocoa-nuts, and other fruit. They seem to be too lazy even to catch the fish which abound on the coast; at least we have never seen any of them so employed, nor have we observed any fish-bones about their huts, although the fish-spears we find among them would seem to indicate that they occasionally vary their bill of fare with a little fish. They are passionately fond of tobacco—which, however, they do not grow for themselves—and as long as a leaf of it can be procured, they are never without a cheroot in their mouths.

We have not yet seen any of their women or children.

Owing to the heavy surf, we have only succeeded in getting half of the water-casks on board to-day, so must remain here another night, although our anchorage is by no means so well sheltered as we could wish.

Saturday, 7th.—It blew hard during the night, and the ship pitched so heavily as to take in water through the stern-ports of the after cabin. High time for us to be off. If it comes on to blow in-shore, we shall be 'in a fix.'

We shipped the remainder of the water-casks by 9 A.M., when we immediately got under weigh, and coasted round to the lee side of the island, where the little brig is lying. Here we found a beautiful sheltered bay, where no wind can touch us, and came to anchor about 1 P.M., abreast of a remarkably picturesque village. The captain and some of the officers went on shore, and brought off a good bag of pigeons for dinner. I felt lazy, and remained on board.

Sunday, 8th.—We had divine service on board, after which the ladies intended to have landed to hunt for shells; but our only remaining boat, in landing some of the men to wash their clothes, got stove in, and before she could be repaired, it was too late to leave the ship, so they were once more disappointed.

I landed in a native canoe, and amused myself by assisting to paddle. The awkward way in which I set about this at first greatly amused my friends with the tails, who laughed heartily; but, after a little practice, I got into the way of it, and did my share of the work as well as any of them.

I spent the forenoon in wandering about the village, visiting the huts, inspecting the arms, household utensils, etc., which I found there, and picking up all the information I could from a gentleman named 'Captain Neptune,' who, in

consideration of being able to speak a few words of English, took upon himself to do the honours of the village, and to act as my cicerone.

Here, for the first time, I saw some women and children. The women are, if possible, still more hideous than the men; and, as if to make themselves as ill-favoured as possible, they cut their hair off close to the head. Their only dress consists of a fringe of soft silky grass, about a foot deep, depending from a platted girdle of the same material, which is fastened round the loins; they do not wear tails like the men.

I found the natives very friendly; cocoa-nuts, plantains, and palm-wine, were offered to me wherever I went; and they seemed rather pleased at the interest I took in visiting their huts, and examining their arms and fishing-tackle.

In one hut I found a man and his wife, with a lot of children, at dinner, and was politely invited to squat on the floor, and join their mess. This consisted of bits of pork, boiled with plantains, and served up in an oblong wooden trough, not over clean, round which we sat, and helped ourselves with our hands. The mess looked rather like pig's meat, but did not taste at all bad, the cocoa-nut-fed pork being excellent. The children—mistaking me probably for an ogre—bolted the moment I entered the hut, and hid themselves in corners like young rats. I dragged one of them from his hiding-place, and tried hard to make friends with him; but in this I failed signally. He screamed, and kicked, and bit, like a young savage as he was, till I was obliged to let him go, when he speedily hid himself again in some dark corner. I was astonished to find that the mother was not at all alarmed by my proceedings, but rather enjoyed the fun, laughing heartily at the gallant defence made by her savage little cub.

The huts are of a peculiar construction, and look like

gigantic bee-hives supported upon pillars. The under part is open all round, and from the top is suspended a board about six feet long, hung like a swing. Here the men spend the greater part of the day, taking gentle exercise in their swing, and sipping palm-wine ; the everlasting cheroot between their lips, and their eyes half closed, like those of a cat basking in the sun. A native, in this position, is the most perfect picture of listless idleness that can well be imagined—a fine specimen of the 'noble savage,' enjoying life at his ease. The upper part of the hut—the house itself in fact—is neatly thatched, and the flooring formed of split bamboo, woven together like basket-work ; this is made strong enough to afford secure footing, but is, at the same time, sufficiently elastic to make a comfortable resting-place—the only bed, as far as I could see, used by the natives. To this part of the house you ascend through a sort of trap-door, or hatchway, by means of a ladder. Round the sides of the huts, spears, knives, bows and arrows, and other implements, are neatly arranged, intermixed with the skulls of the hogs they have killed; but whether these are merely kept as trophies, or whether there is any superstitious observance connected with them, I was unable to ascertain—my friend, 'Captain Neptune's,' stock of English not being sufficient to afford an explanation. All the huts I visited appeared to be kept remarkably neat and clean.

Every native I saw was armed with a cutlass blade, divested of the hilt, and lapped round the but-end with cocoa-nut fibre, so as to form a handle after his own fashion. This appears to be their most serviceable tool as well as weapon. With it they cut cocoa-nuts, hew down trees, fashion their canoes, and, in short, do everything where a cutting-tool is required. Every man is armed with one, and never moves a yard from home without it ; and this is the only thing they

cannot be induced to part with in the way of barter. Besides these, the only weapons I observed among them were light throwing-spears, like the assegais of the Kaffers, with which they kill the wild hog; various kinds of fish-spears, small bows and arrows, which they say they also use for killing fish; and cross-bows, with long slender arrows for shooting birds. They are evidently not a warlike people, and are more given to good living than hard fighting.

Monday, 9th.—We were rather surprised this morning by seeing a strange ship work into the bay, and come to anchor close to us; the more so, as she carried a flag which no one on board could make out: it was white, with a scarlet peacock emblazoned in the centre. As soon as her sails were furled, the captain, an American, came on board our ship, when we learnt that she is the 'Tigran' from Rangoon, bearing the Burmese flag, and that she has come to these islands to procure a cargo of cocoa-nuts. She is a fine new ship of 400 tons; and, as the captain informed us, was built and rigged—iron-work, cordage, and sails included—by native Burmese.

The captain of the 'Tigran,' and her owner, an Armenian merchant, dined with us. The former appears to be an intelligent well-informed man. He has been trading among these islands for the last six years; and, in the course of conversation, I managed to obtain from him some information regarding the inhabitants. He says they do not appear to have any form of religion, nor any object of worship. But that they believe in a future state appears probable from the ceremonies practised at the burial of the dead. The body of the deceased is placed in a large box, or the hull of an old canoe, together with the carcass of a pig—which is slaughtered for the occasion—and a good supply of yams and cocoa-nuts, together with spears, paddles, cutlasses, and other things

which are supposed likely to prove useful in the next world. The box is buried in the centre of the village, the spot being marked by a piece of bamboo stuck into the ground, with a strip of cloth fastened to the upper end like a flag; and after a few years, when the body is completely decomposed, it is dug up; the bones are thrown aside in the woods, and the spears, cutlasses, etc., are restored to their former owners. How far this account may be correct I know not; I merely give it as I received it.

One of our men died last night, and was buried this morning on shore. I went to visit him about half an hour before he expired, and read to him the prayers appointed for the visitation of the sick; the poor fellow was conscious to the last, and thanked me gratefully for going to see him. I was glad to remark that the prayers appeared to soothe and comfort him in his last moments.

We got under weigh, and steered for the island of Terressa, which we expect to reach to-morrow morning.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CRUISE TO THE NICOBAR AND ANDAMAN ISLANDS.
(Continued.)

Tuesday, 10*th*.—At daylight, this morning, we were abreast of the island of Battymalve, a small uninhabited island, said to abound with wild hog; but the coast is so rocky, and there is so much surf, that the captain did not consider it safe to attempt landing; so we passed on without stopping to explore it, which I was rather anxious to do. We also passed the island of Chowrey, from whence several large canoes, carrying from twenty to thirty men each, came off to us, and bartered shells and coral for tobacco. About noon, we came to anchor on the east side of the island of Terressa, in a large semicircular bay, where we are well sheltered from any wind likely to blow at this season.

We are lying within a cable's length of the beach, in twenty-five fathoms of water; and so bold is the coast that, as far as depth of water is concerned, we might have moored the ship to the trees on shore.

To the eastward of us lies the little island of Bompoka, distant about four miles. It is high and well wooded, and is not only a picturesque object from our anchorage, but affords good shelter during the N.E. monsoon.

Soon after we had come to anchor, we were boarded by 'Captain Malbrook,' who reported himself as being the head man of the island, and a person of some importance. He is a respectable-looking old savage, dressed in a shirt and

trowsers. It appears that he has been recognised as chief of the island by the Danish resident at the island of Nancowrie; and, in virtue of his office, has been entrusted with the Danish flag, and invested with a badge of office in the form of a footman's silver-headed cane—a distinction of which he appears to be not a little proud.

I observed several women in the canoes which came off to-day—the first I have seen afloat—and quite as ill-favoured as their sisters at Carnicobar.

Another man died to-day, and I went on shore to bury him in the evening. I was much struck with the good feeling evinced by the natives on this occasion. They not only insisted on the body being buried in the centre of their village —as is the custom among themselves—but assisted in digging the grave; and seeing that the body was about to be committed to the earth, merely sewed up in a hammock, they made signs for us to stop; and one of them, seizing a hatchet carried by one of the sailors, proceeded to cut up a small canoe which was lying on the beach, and formed an ingenious sort of coffin, by placing the body in one half, and covering it over with the other. They appeared quite to understand the solemn nature of the burial service; and while I was reading it, they stood round us in a circle, with their arms folded, and their heads hanging down, as if mourning for a friend.

It was so dark by the time the grave was finished, that I was obliged to procure some of the torches which the natives use for spearing fish at night, and have them lighted to enable me to read the service.

It was a very striking scene—wild and picturesque in the extreme. The spot selected for the grave was overshadowed by a group of stately cocoa-nut palms; the night was still as death; not a leaf stirred; and no sound was heard save the

solemn moaning sound of the surf, as it broke slowly and at regular intervals against the beach, like the tolling of a passing bell. Our stately ship, with her spars and rigging showing in strong relief against a starry sky, lay with her hull in deep shadow, like a sleeping leviathan, a dark and shapeless mass, save when an occasional light, flashing through an open port, shot a gleam of quivering light over the dark glassy waves. Around us, the graceful stems of the palm-trees, illuminated by the light of the torches, shone like pillars of silver; while the bright green leaves overhead sparkled like emeralds. The wild appearance of the group of savages which surrounded our little party—their uncouth features now flashing out brightly in the torchlight, and again relapsing into gloom, when their glittering eyeballs alone were visible—would have formed a good study for Rembrandt. And so death-like was the silence, that when I began to read the funeral service, I almost started at the sound of my own voice.

As soon as the grave was filled, our friend 'Malbrook' stuck up a slip of bamboo at each end of it, attaching to them little flags, to form which he tore up a piece of blue cloth, an article of no small value among these poor people. I was so much struck by his sympathetic and friendly behaviour on this occasion that I begged his acceptance of a little present, but this he, as well as all the other natives, refused, almost indignantly; apparently quite hurt at being offered any remuneration for their friendly assistance—a lesson which might be studied with advantage by some of their more enlightened neighbours.

Wednesday, 11th.—The ladies intended to have gone on shore to-day; but the weather being wet and squally, we all remained on board, and employed ourselves in writing journals and sketching.

'Captain Malbrook' came off in a canoe to pay his respects. He had not the slightest objection to receive presents this morning; so we rigged him out in a long chintz dressing-gown, which reached to his heels, and crowned him with a smart glazed hat, having the name of the ship emblazoned in gilt letters on the front; and, thus accoutred, we marched the old gentleman round the deck, brandishing his silver-headed cane like a drum-major, and looking 'every inch a king.' After presenting him with a cutlass and some other valuables, and having served out a glass of grog and a bundle of cheroots to each of his boat's crew, we piped to man the side, and handed our illustrious visitor into his canoe with all due ceremony. He was evidently much pleased with his reception; and being rather elevated by sundry glasses of grog which he had imbibed during his visit, went off as happy as a prince, shouting, clapping his hands, and singing snatches of 'Malbrook' at the top of his voice.

Thursday, 12*th*.—Mrs. Reed and Mrs. Radford went on shore to-day, for the first time. Captain Shuttleworth and I accompanied them, and the other gentlemen went on a voyage of discovery to the island of Bompoka in native canoes.

The day was beautifully calm. The small rippling waves kissed the coral beach with a gentle murmur; and our light gig, as it glided swiftly towards the shore, appeared to float in air, so perfectly transparent was the water. Forty feet beneath us, beds of coral glowed with all the colours of the rainbow; and shoals of fish, of the most brilliant hues, darted about, flashing like meteors in the sunlit sea. As I lay gazing over the gunwale of the boat in a delightful dreamy sort of reverie, all the dull realities of every-day life were forgotten; and I was beginning to people the crystal depths with mermaids and sea-nymphs, combing their flowing locks,

and disporting themselves amidst the magnificent branches of many-coloured coral—which might well have graced the enchanted cave of mermaid or fairy queen—when I was roused from my dream by the grating of the boat's keel, as she touched the beach, and jumped up to hand the ladies on shore.

Having landed, we proceeded to the village, to pay our respects to 'Captain Malbrook.' He did not at first make his appearance; and the people gave us to understand, by signs, that the captain was dressing himself in his robes of state to receive us.

Presently the great 'Malbrook' issued from his hut, clothed in his chintz dressing-gown and glazed hat, which he doffed gallantly as he bowed to the ladies; and extending his dirty withered paw to shake hands, exclaimed—

"How you do, ma friend? D—— you eye! hope you very well, sar."

This polite salutation fortunately exhausted worthy 'Malbrook's' stock of English, after delivering which he held his peace, and behaved with the utmost propriety. But the second in command—his prime minister, I suppose—whose only dress consisted of an old battered tarpaulin hat and a tail, was unfortunately a better linguist, and the most boisterous, forward, disagreeable fellow I ever met with. He kept slapping me on the back, shaking hands, and laughing immoderately at my going about with two 'gals,' as he called the ladies—for the captain, having gone off to look for pigeons, had left them both in my charge. Pointing to one of the ladies, he inquired—

"That you wife, ma friend? B—t my eyes! fine gal that—too much good wife make."

I told him—rather to the astonishment of the ladies—that they were *both* my wives: upon which he exclaimed—

"Ha, ma friend! what for two wife got?—that no good! One man one wife, that plenty. One gal you wife, one gal my wife—that good."

Thus he went on laughing, talking, and swearing, to the great annoyance of the ladies, who at last became rather frightened; till, after many fruitless attempts to stop his mouth, I lost all patience, knocked off his hat, and gave him a cuff on the side of his head.

The poor fellow appeared quite thunderstruck by my sudden ebullition of temper; but took it in good part, and held his peace.

I then explained to him that his style of conversation was disagreeable to the ladies, and that he must not talk any more English; at which he appeared mightily astonished, and not a little disconcerted, for he evidently prided himself on his choice collection of English phrases, and fancied he had been making himself particularly agreeable.

Old 'Malbrook' offered us, as usual, cocoa-nut milk to drink; and by way of doing the thing in good style, he presented it to the ladies in a dirty old wine-glass with the bottom broken off. He evidently took great pride in this valuable utensil, and was much astonished at the bad taste of the ladies, who preferred drinking out of the cocoa-nut shell.

We saw several dogs in the village, and a goodly stock of domestic poultry; all these animals, as well as the pigs, appear to feed almost exclusively upon cocoa-nuts, which the natives cut in two, and leave about for their use. The dogs are of a reddish-brown colour, with a smooth skin and upright ears, not unlike the common pariah dog of India, but rather smaller; they appear to be very gentle good-tempered animals. It was amusing to watch the neat and ingenious manner in which they managed to scoop out the contents of a cocoa-nut

with the teeth of the lower jaw, cleaning out the shell as effectually as if it had been done with a spoon. They also display considerable dexterity in ascending and descending the ladders leading to the upper part of the huts, running up and down with as much ease as if they had been flights of steps.

After seeing all that was to be seen about the village, and having been introduced to Lady Malbrook, a curiously ill-favoured old dame, we returned on board ; and, by way of a change, took the ladies off in a large native canoe, the light and gliding motion of which pleased them much.

The ladies appear to think they have seen quite enough of savage society, and I do not think they will be in a hurry to repeat their visit to 'Captain Malbrook' and his loquacious prime minister.

Friday, 13*th*.—Another man died last night, and was buried on shore this morning. Dr. Maxwell and I went on shore, and killed a good bag of pigeons and a green snake. I have now seen six varieties of pigeons on these islands. The Nicobar pigeon, which I have before described ; the white nutmeg pigeon (*Col. Litoralis*), nearly as large as the Nicobar pigeon, pure white, with the exception of the tips of the wings and tail, which are black ; the common green parrot pigeon (*Col. Vernans*) ; and three others which I have not as yet been able to identify. One is a large gray pigeon, with greenish wings, nearly as large as the Nicobar pigeon ; another, rather smaller than the parrot pigeon, is a beautiful bird, spotted with green, blue, yellow, and red ; and the other, which I have before mentioned, is of a chestnut colour, spotted and banded with black like a woodcock.

I bought a small canoe from one of the natives, to take home as a curiosity, and Dr. Maxwell and I paddled off

to the ship in our overladen bark—she being only chartered to carry one—amidst shouts of laughter from the natives, who were much amused at our awkward way of handling her in getting through the surf, where we were once or twice nearly swamped.

Saturday, 14th.—Mr. Gall (the surgeon of the ship) went on shore with me to-day to shoot pigeons, and I was wicked enough to persuade the poor little man to take a passage in my canoe, which—as I have before mentioned—being only chartered for one passenger, was overloaded with two, and therefore required rather delicate handling. The weather being perfectly calm, we got on pretty well—the poor little doctor, however, in a miserable state of terror, and, as he told me afterwards, wishing me and my canoe at the bottom of the Red Sea. He said nothing, but sat in the bottom of the little craft, with his knees doubled up to his chin, and paddled away 'for the bare life,' calculating that every vigorous stroke brought him so much nearer to the wished-for shore.

The village to which we were bound being about two miles from the ship, poor Gall's mettle was sorely tried before we reached our destination. He persevered, however; and after many a halt, and many a weary groan, we at last reached the back of the surf; but there his courage failed him. The surf was running rather high, and he swore he would not venture to cross it. I told him it was too late to think of this; that land we must; and, moreover, that unless he paddled with a will, we should certainly be swamped. The doctor, after a few minutes' deliberation, took heart of grace, and grasping his paddle with a 'do-or-die' look, struck out like a little Hercules. The light canoe darted forward, and mounting the crest of the first surf, glided over it like a duck.

"Well done, doctor! Hurra for little 'Æsculapius!' Give

her another shove like that when the next wave comes, and we are high and dry on the beach."

But the poor little doctor had made his last effort; nerves and sinews were alike exhausted; his paddle was thrown in the bottom of the canoe; his arms hung powerless by his sides; and with open mouth and staring eyes, he watched the rapid approach of the coming surf.

"Pull, you little devil!"

No answer, but a wild vacant stare.

"Well then, look out for squalls, for here it comes."

"Oh dear, I can't swim!"

"Confound you then, why don't you pull for your life?"

But it was too late. On came the surf, its crest of white foam curling over our heads. The canoe broached to, and turned bottom up; our guns, of course, went to the bottom, and the canoe, the little doctor, and I, rolled along one over the other towards the beach. Fortunately, there were lots of natives waiting to receive us, who rushed into the surf, and pulled us on shore; the canoe was also hauled up, not much the worse for her upset, and some of the young fellows, who are almost amphibious, recovered our guns by diving for them. So, after all, we were not much the worse for our upset, except that it spoiled our day's shooting; for which, by the way, I am not particularly sorry; for our worthy captain, being a bit of a screw, has given us nothing but pigeons to eat for the last week, and we are getting rather tired of them.

The little doctor, having satisfied himself that he was still in the land of the living, returned thanks for his escape, and then and there made a vow never again to trust himself in a one-man canoe—a vow which I shall never be guilty of tempting him to break—so we signalled for the captain's gig

to come on shore for him. I paddled the canoe back by myself—and spent the afternoon in drying and oiling the guns, which were in a sad pickle.

Some of the wild pigs brought on board for sea-stock broke loose to-day, and kicked up 'the devil's delights.' They were regularly savage, charging and upsetting everything and everybody that came in their way; till, having driven the crew into the rigging, and cleared the decks fore and aft, they jumped out of the port-holes, and swam towards the shore. They were pursued by the boats and retaken, but not without a desperate resistance on their part.

Sunday, 15*th*.—We had divine service on board this morning. The boats were all hoisted in for the day, and no one went on shore.

Monday, 16*th*.—After breakfast, we got under weigh, bade adieu to Terressa, and steered for the island of Nancowry. We made it about 2 P.M., but the weather being thick and squally, and the approach to the anchorage rather intricate, the captain was afraid to venture in; so we wore ship, and stood back for our old berth at Carnicobar. Towards the evening, we passed close under the lee of Bompoka, and as the weather looked threatening, and the ladies were anxious to have a quiet night's rest after pitching about all day in a nasty cross sea, the captain agreed to anchor for the night; but although we stood in close enough to have thrown a stone on shore, we could find no bottom with twenty-five fathoms; so having made all snug for a squally night, we stood out to sea again under easy sail.

Tuesday, 17*th*.—Last night was squally and disagreeable, and proved that having double-reefed the topsails at sunset was no unnecessary precaution. Passed Battymalve at 4 A.M., and dropped anchor in our old berth at Carnicobar about 10

A.M. The day being wet and stormy, no one went on shore except Dr. Maxwell. He returned in the afternoon thoroughly drenched, with a good bag of pigeons, and a young python, about seven feet long. I have remarked three varieties of snake on these islands—the green snake, three of which have been killed; this python; and a small black snake about eighteen inches long. The only other reptiles I have seen are lizards, of various kinds, which abound in the woods.

Wednesday, 18*th*.—Sent the water-casks on shore to be filled. My canoe, which was in tow of the ship, broke adrift during the night, and was lost.

While we were washing decks this morning, the butcher threw overboard the carcass of a pig which had died during the night; and it had not drifted more than twenty yards from the ship, when an enormous shark rose to the surface, seized it in his jaws, and swam off with his head above water, shaking it like a bull-dog, followed by a host of other sharks, splashing and fighting for a share of the spoil.

Thursday, 19*th*.—Went on shore to-day. Bought another canoe, which I got in exchange for an old chintz dressing-gown, and paddled her off to the ship. I am delighted with the performance of my new purchase; for although it blew a fresh breeze in shore, and there was a good deal of surf on, the little craft glided over it like a sea-bird, and never shipped a drop of water.

I saw more women to-day than I have yet seen; but although many of them were young, and had good figures, I could not discover one with the slightest pretensions to good looks.

We intend to leave the Nicobars to-morrow, and proceed to Port Cornwallis in the Andaman Islands.

Friday, 20*th*.—Employed all the morning getting water

on board. After dinner up anchor, and stood out to sea, with a light breeze off the land.

The doctor having found the juice of the green cocoa-nut a refreshing and wholesome drink for the invalids, we have laid in a supply of several tons, and the men are allowed to help themselves at discretion. The cocoa-nut, while the husk is still in its green state, may be cut through with a knife almost as easily as a large cabbage; the shell is thin and soft, and the half-formed kernal—if it may be so called—is found to be of the consistency of curds, which, being scooped out, forms a wholesome and nourishing food, which is not the case when it is full-grown and has become hard. But the best part of the fruit is the juice. In its green state each nut contains nearly a quart of delicious sparkling liquid as clear as spring water, and as cold; and in a hot climate it is the most refreshing drink I have ever tasted.

Another man died to-day, and we 'committed his body to the deep' in the evening. This was the first time I had ever seen the funeral service performed at sea, and it struck me as a peculiarly solemn ceremony.

It was a beautiful still moonlight night, with hardly air enough to make the upper sails draw. All hands were mustered round the open gangway where lay the corpse, sewed up in a hammock, with a heavy shot attached to the feet, and resting on a grating. The ship slipped along smoothly and silently, and a solemn stillness pervaded the crowded decks. At the words—'We commit his body to the deep,' the grating was tilted up, and the corpse launched overboard, where it disappeared in the blue water with a sullen plunge. A deep and universal sigh was breathed over a departed comrade, the waters closed over him, and again all was silent as the grave.

Ere the first watch was called, a fresh breeze came curling over the slumbering waves; and our gallant bark, as if roused from a melancholy reverie, shook her pinions, and darted forward into the gloom of the midnight ocean, leaving a track of phosphoric light blazing in her wake.

Saturday, 21*st*.—We made a good run during the night; and at daylight this morning sighted the Little Andaman, the most southern island of the group.

In the course of the day, we passed 'The Brothers' and 'The Sisters,' two groups of small uninhabited islands; and at sunset were abreast of another group, called 'The Five Islands.'

I spent the morning in reading an account of the Andamans in 'Hamilton's Gazetteer,' which, judging from the very truthful description he gives of the Nicobars, ought to be correct. He says, "The Great Andaman is about 140 miles in length, by 20 in breadth. In the centre of the island is a mountain, called Saddle Peak, 2400 feet in height. The island is clothed with an impenetrable forest, and is only inhabited by a few savages, along the sea-coast. The population of the island is supposed not to exceed 2000 or 2500 souls. The most common trees are the poon, dammer, oil trees, red-wood, cotton, ebony, and almond trees; soondry, chingry, and beady (whether these three last be trees or shrubs, I know not—I have never met with the names before); the Alexandrian laurel, the poplar, a tree resembling satin-wood; bamboo, ground-rattan, and a variety of shrubs."

He does not mention any animals, except a few wild hogs; and describes the birds as being similar to those of the Nicobar Islands. Fish of various kinds abound, and sharks of an enormous size frequent the coast.

Of the natives he says, "The stature of the Andamans

seldom exceeds five feet. Their limbs are disproportionately slender; their bellies protuberant; with high shoulders, and large heads. They appear to be a degenerate race of negroes, with woolly hair, flat noses, and thick lips; their eyes are small and red; their skin a deep sooty black; while their countenances exhibit an extreme of wretchedness, a mixture of famine and ferocity. They go quite naked, and are insensible to any shame from exposure.

"The few implements they use are of the rudest texture. Their principal weapon is a bow, about four feet long, the string made of the fibres of a tree, or a slip of bamboo, with arrows of reed headed with fish-bone, or wood hardened in the fire. . . . . They shoot and spear fish with great dexterity; and having kindled a fire, they throw the fish upon the coals, and devour it half broiled. Their habitations display little more ingenuity than the dens of wild beasts. Four sticks, fixed in the ground, are bound together at the top, and fastened transversely by others, to which branches of trees are suspended. . . . . Being much incommoded by insects, their first occupation in the morning is to plaster their bodies all over with mud, which, hardening in the sun, forms an impenetrable armour. Their woolly heads they paint with red ochre and water, and, when thus fully dressed, a more hideous appearance is not to be found in nature. Their salutation is performed by lifting up one leg, and smacking with the hand the lower part of the thigh."

He goes on to say the natives have been accused of cannibalism, but that this has never been well authenticated. The men he describes as being cunning and revengeful, and exceedingly hostile to strangers.

It is a curious circumstance that hitherto no one has been able to trace the origin of this strange people. They are

totally unlike the inhabitants of India, the Burmese Empire, or any of the neighbouring islands. They appear to be a degenerate race of Africans; but whence they came, or when, remains an unsolved mystery.

We shall see how this description tallies with our experience; so, in the meantime, I shut up my book and go on deck to see 'how the land lies.'

This being 'Saturday night at sea,' we drank 'sweethearts and wives,' and did not 'douse the lights' till an hour later than usual.*

* I have lately been reading, with much interest, Dr. Mouat's book on the Andaman Islands, published in 1863, from which I find that our savage friends of the Andamans have not made much progress in civilization since I had the pleasure of making their acquaintance in 1833. Dr. Mouat describes them as being still as savage, as unclad, and as determinedly hostile to strangers as they were in my time. He however states that they now use canoes, which I do not believe was the case in 1833; for although we explored the shores all round Port Cornwallis, we never saw a canoe; nor have I ever met with any one who at that time had seen such a thing in their possession. The canoes described by Dr. Mouat correspond exactly with those used in the Nicobar Islands, from which circumstance I think it probable that a canoe from the Nicobars may have been cast on shore on the Andamans, and been used by the natives as a pattern, from which they have since constructed canoes of their own.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE ANDAMAN ISLANDS.

Sunday, 22*d*.—We have had a nasty wet squally night, in consequence of which we were obliged to stand well out to sea, and at daylight this morning we were out of sight of land. At sunrise, we hauled our wind again, and about 7 A.M. sighted the island. At noon we were abreast of Stewart's Sound, about twenty or thirty miles south of Port Cornwallis.

Having stood close in-shore, we coasted along in smooth water, with a fine rattling breeze on our quarter. Passed Saddle Peak; and about 2.30 P.M. made the entrance of Port Cornwallis. The coast all along is exceedingly wild and picturesque. The mountains rise abruptly from the sea; and the dense forest with which they are clothed grows down to the water's edge.

The entrance to the beautiful natural harbour of Port Cornwallis is about three-quarters of a mile broad, bounded by a small island on the north side, and a reef of rocks on the south, with sufficient depth of water for the largest ship.

As it was now blowing hard, with heavy squalls, we took in all sail except the three topsails, double reefed; and it was well we did so, for we had hardly weathered the reef, and got into the mouth of the harbour, before we were taken all aback by a tremendous squall off the land which came down upon us from the mountains, like a thunderbolt, and nearly laid the old ship on her beam-ends. I never saw such a scene

of confusion. 'Let go the topsail halyards!' 'Clew up' this!—'Haul down' that! While the wind, howling through the rigging, made such an uproar, that, even with the assistance of a speaking-trumpet, the captain could hardly make himself heard. The rain which accompanied the squall was the heaviest I have ever seen; it came down in a sheet of water that almost took away one's breath. The atmosphere was so thick that we could not see more than half the ship's length ahead; and although we were surrounded on all sides by reefs and small islands, we were obliged to let go two anchors, to prevent the ship from being driven on shore, and brought up in a very awkward berth, surrounded by coral reefs, and in the very entrance to the harbour, where we are exposed to the action of a heavy swell.

Monday, 23*d*.—It continued to blow hard all night, so much so that we were obliged to veer out chain two or three times to prevent the ship from driving. By daylight the weather had moderated a little, so up anchor and ran in a couple of miles further, where we have good anchorage, and are completely land-locked.

The harbour of Port Cornwallis is what we would call in Scotland a loch; it extends inland about eight miles, and is about three miles wide. The scenery is exceedingly beautiful. The surrounding hills are clothed with stately forest-trees, and the loch itself is studded with numerous islands, which are also covered with trees and shrubs. It gives one altogether the idea of a beautiful inland lake, into which the ship had been transported by magic.

We have already had a specimen of the amiable disposition of the natives.

Soon after we had anchored, the captain of the ship, accompanied by Short, went on shore with the carpenter and

a gang of men to cut some spars which were required on board. They all went unarmed, except Short, who took his gun with him. Having landed in a little bay, just abreast of the ship, and seeing no traces of natives, the carpenter and his gang set to work cutting down trees, while Short and the captain strolled along the beach seeking for shells and coral.

The men had not been long at work before they were startled by hearing an arrow whiz past them, and directly afterwards came another, which wounded one of the men in the side. Upon this they shouted to the captain that the natives were upon them, and their shout was answered by a flight of arrows from their unseen enemies. Having foolishly landed unarmed, they were of course obliged to run for their lives ; and rushed down to the beach followed by some fifty or sixty naked savages, yelling and whooping like fiends.

Fortunately, a few minutes before the attack commenced, the captain had shoved the boat off a few yards from the beach to look for coral, and so kept her afloat, otherwise the ebbing tide would, by this time, have left her high and dry ; and some lives would probably have been lost before they could have launched her. As it was, Short had a narrow escape. He had been strolling along the beach, and was at some distance from the boat when the alarm was given ; and although he ran his best he was nearly surrounded by the natives before he reached her. He was obliged, in self-defence, to face round and fire before he took the water, and was dragged on board wet up to his armpits. But although one man fell, this only appeared to make the others more furious ; they continued to shoot arrows into the boat as long as she was within reach, and even waded into the water up to their breasts to get nearer. Two or three men were wounded ; both Short and the captain were struck by arrows, which

fortunately glanced off their clothes without inflicting a wound; and several others stuck in the boat. They must have been shot with considerable force, as at sixty yards one of them knocked a splinter as large as a man's hand out of a hickory oar.

Short's ammunition having got wet in wading off to the boat, he was unable to return the fire; and the rascals remained on the beach, yelling and shouting triumphantly, till the boat reached the ship; when we astonished them a little by sending a nine-pound shot among them. The ball passed over their heads, but the crash it made among the trees gave them some idea of the range and smashing effect of round shot; they scuttled off into the woods like rabbits, and did not show themselves again for many days.

On examining the arrows which had stuck in the boat, we found them to be very neatly made. They are formed of a hollow cane, about three feet long, into one end of which a piece of hard-wood is inserted; the point being formed of the sharp bone of the sting-ray, neatly whipped on, and smeared over with a sort of red gum, which looks suspiciously like poison.

One of our native hospital dressers, who was in the Rangoon fleet when it assembled here, on its way to the Rangoon war, informs us that four sepoys, belonging to a watering-party which went on shore on that occasion, were shot by the natives, three killed, and one wounded; and he thinks the arrows must be poisoned, as the wounded man, who only received a slight scratch on the arm, died of mortification within forty-eight hours.

The poor fellows who have been wounded are therefore rather anxious about themselves; but the doctor, having taken the precaution to scarify the wounds, and cauterize them with

caustic, I trust that, even if the arrows be poisoned—which is doubtful—these precautions, taken in time, may prevent any bad effects.

The doctor was urged to try the effect of one of the arrows upon a fowl; but this he declined to do, stating as his reason that in the event of its proving to be poisoned, the knowledge of its being so would have a bad effect on his patients. He and I, however, tried the experiment quietly in his cabin, and satisfied ourselves that the arrows were not poisoned.

In the afternoon we landed with the ladies on one of the small wooded islands about half a mile from the ship, which, from its size, appeared to be uninhabited; but, 'to make assurance doubly sure,' the captain ordered a couple of nine-pound shot to be fired into it, which knocked up such a dust that had any natives been there they would have found it rather too hot to hold them.

We landed at low water, when the coral reefs were left uncovered, and picked up a number of fine shells—some of which the captain says are valuable—besides a lot of oysters, which we ate for supper. I also killed a curious fish, of about five pounds' weight, of a bright scarlet colour, with large teeth like those of a horse, which I suppose to be a red-snapper; it proved very good food.

It is rather provoking to find our would-be friends, the Andaman Islanders, such unsociable savages; for the white coral beach and green foliage growing down to the water's edge look so delightfully tempting, that lying at anchor here, within half a mile of them, and feeling that you dare not land without running the risk of getting an arrow planted in your vitals, is little short of the punishment of Tantalus.

Tuesday, 24*th*.—Boats employed all day in cutting and

bringing off wood. No natives seen. After dinner the ladies landed on the island, and picked up some good specimens of shells.

Thursday, 26th.—Blowing and raining hard all day. No one went on shore. Employed in writing up journal.

Friday, 27th.—As the weather looked promising this morning, we made a party, after breakfast, to start in the captain's gig, and explore the head of the bay. Our party consisted of the captain and Mrs. Reed, in the stern-sheets; Pender, a raw-boned, ungainly-looking Irish subaltern, in the bows—with his long legs coiled away heaven knows where—doing duty as figure-head; and Dr. Maxwell, with two of the crew and myself, pulling.

The wind being fair when we started, we set a small lug-sail, and glided along merrily enough for about a couple of miles; when, just as we had rounded a rocky point, and were admiring the magnificent scenery, we were met by a tremendous squall of wind and rain, which almost blew our little craft out of the water, and made us douse mast and sail in a hurry.

Having the fear of a rocky lee-shore before us—to say nothing of the reception we might expect to meet at the hands of our savage neighbours, in the event of our being cast away among them—we betook ourselves to the oars with a will; and, by dint of hard pulling, barely managed to hold our own till the squall was past; our gallant captain being employed, meanwhile, in baling out the water, which came over the bows in such quantities that it was as much as he could do to keep her afloat. Had one of the oars given way we must inevitably have gone on shore, and either have been devoured by sharks, or been made into minced-collops by 'Hoky Poky Wanky Fum, King of the Cannibal Islands.'

Poor Mrs. Reed tried to shelter herself with an umbrella, but had hardly got it up before it was blown away like a balloon, leaving her with nothing but a thin shawl to shelter her from the blast.

When the squall had passed, we pulled away to the lee side of what appeared to be a small wooded island, intending to land and console ourselves, after our ducking, with some little creature-comforts we had been prudent enough to stow away in the locker of the boat; but, on approaching our supposed island, we found it to be nothing more than a mass of mangrove bushes growing out of the water, without a spot of dry land to be seen. These, however, afforded us good shelter; so, having made our boat fast to the bushes, we proceeded to devour an enormous luncheon of cold fowl, ham, and ship-biscuit, washed down by a stiff glass of grog, which we felt we had earned; and, as the weather looked threatening, we decided to return to the ship without exploring further.

We had a sharp pull to regain the ship, through a nasty short chopping sea, which drenched us with spray. Poor Pender, who appears to hate water like a cat, looked very wretched. I shall never forget the picture of abject misery he exhibited, stuck up in the narrow bows of the gig, with the spray dashing over him, and his teeth—between cold and terror—rattling in his head like a dice-box. There he sat, with his long legs doubled up, miserably cramped; his knees under his chin; his thin, cadaverous countenance, rendered doubly so by the deadly pallor of sea-sickness; and his long bony hands clutching the gunwale of the boat on both sides, as if striving to save her from upsetting. As each successive sea broke over him, he half sprang from his seat, looking round with the air of a maniac, and shouting in a rich Irish brogue, broken by convulsive gasps:—

"Och, bloody wars! Sure, it's drownded we'll be!" Here another sea breaking over him, made him gasp for breath worse than ever. "Captain dear, for the love of the Virgin, take us out of this; for it's kil't I am entirely." And so he went on, shouting and gasping as long as the squall lasted. So absurd was the scene, that even Mrs. Reed, who was nearly as uncomfortable as himself, could not resist joining in the laugh against him.

As soon as we got back to the ship, I administered a strong glass of hot negus to Mrs. Reed, which I hope will prevent her feeling any bad effects from the dreadful ducking she has had.

Saturday, 28*th*.—Blowing very hard, with a heavy swell rolling into the harbour, and much rain. Drank 'sweethearts and wives' as usual, and spent a pleasant evening, in spite of the bad weather outside.

Sunday, 29*th*.—It blew a heavy gale of wind last night, and the weather is still squally. We managed, however, to have divine service on board. The men who were wounded by arrows are doing well.

Monday, 30*th*.—It blew, if possible, harder than ever last night, and there was a heavy swell, even in the harbour, sufficient to make the ship roll in a very uncomfortable manner. However, as the weather looked like clearing up, we organized another party to explore the head of the bay, which we did not succeed in reaching the other day, owing to the badness of the weather.

No one but Dr. Maxwell and the captain cared to join the party; so, after breakfast, we started in the gig, the captain and Maxwell occupying the stern-sheets, and I, with three of the crew, pulling; and as we intended landing on the main island, we of course took arms in the boat.

After proceeding about five miles towards the head of the bay, we doubled the north end of Long Island, and found ourselves in the most beautiful little bay that can well be conceived. It had the appearance of being completely landlocked, and was studded with small islands, all of which were clothed with forest trees, and a variety of beautiful flowering shrubs, which, overhanging the beach, dipped their branches into the clear green water, here lying smooth and unruffled, as if no rude blast had ever disturbed it. Shoals of fish were leaping in all directions; and fish-hawks sailed close over our heads, or perched confidingly on the nearest trees, quite undismayed by the sight of such unwonted visitors. The scene altogether gave one the idea of the most perfect peace and solitude; and was more like an artificial sheet of water in a beautiful shrubbery, than a solitary bay on the coast of a savage island. Even the skipper—who is not of a romantic temperament—looked, for once in his life, as if he had soul enough to admire the beautiful works of nature, and said it was 'an 'eavenly spot.'

Having explored some of the islands, and admired the beautiful shrubs, for which I was not much the wiser—my slight knowledge of natural history being confined to the zoological department—we got on board again, and pushing our boat between the stems of the mangrove bushes, which extended some distance into the water, we found ourselves floating in a natural arbour which completely sheltered us from the sun. Here, notwithstanding our admiration of the picturesque, we were unromantic enough to make a hearty luncheon off cold junk and ship biscuits, which we washed down with a glass of grog; and, having lighted our cheroots, we proceeded on our voyage.

Coasted along under the lee of the island, for about two

miles, and on rounding the end of it we discovered a tempting little bay with a white coral beach ; and seeing no signs of natives, we decided to land here and explore. We had got within twenty yards of the beach, and were just about to run the boat aground, when a Portuguese seaman, named Josey, who had narrowly escaped being wounded on the first landing, and was therefore peculiarly sharp-sighted on this occasion, shouted out—

"Take care! hold hard! I see mans!"

And the fellow was right enough ; for, on taking a good look, we observed sundry ill-favoured, black visages peering at us from behind the trees.

The captain's first impulse was to order the crew to stand up and fire a volley, and the men were only too ready to do his bidding. But this I would not allow, much to the disappointment of Josey, who evidently had a great longing to bag a nigger. Fighting in self-defence is all very well ; but to shoot, in cold blood, and while out of reach of their arrows, poor ignorant savages, who naturally looked upon us as invaders of their country, and tried to defend themselves, like plucky little fellows as they are, would have been an act of wanton cruelty which I could not sanction. We lay upon our oars for some time, watching their movements ; but although we could see them dodging from tree to tree, and made all sorts of friendly signs, we could not induce one of them to venture beyond the shelter of the jungle.

As we were all well armed, I proposed to the captain to land, and try if, by fair means, we could not bring the savage little rascals to terms ; but this he refused to do, for although he said he would not mind trying it himself, he would not feel justified in risking the lives of his boat's crew merely to gratify his own curiosity.

The two English sailors appeared rather disappointed at not being allowed to 'have a spree with the niggers;' but Josey, who from the time he first spied the natives had been praying lustily to his patron saint, appeared much relieved in his mind, and betook himself to his oar with a will. The natives, seeing us retreat, rushed down to the beach, uttering savage yells, making use of insulting gestures, and shouting triumphantly as long as we were in sight.

In the course of the day we coasted all round the harbour of Port Cornwallis, and landed at several places where we thought it likely we should find traces of the inhabitants. We saw nothing more of the natives, although I have no doubt we were watched and followed by them; but at several places where we landed we found recent traces of them, such as the smouldering ashes of their fires, and some rudely-constructed places of shelter—for they could hardly be called huts—formed by sticking leafy branches into the ground, round three-fourths of a circle, and binding their tops together; the lee-side being left open, and the ground inside the hut covered with a soft bed of dry leaves.

We saw no canoes, and as far as I can learn from those who have visited the islands before, the natives do not possess any. We had a long day's work, and did not get back to the ship till some time after dark, all pretty well tired.

Tuesday, October 1st. — Our time being nearly up, all hands busily employed getting the ship ready for sea.

Wednesday, 2d. — Sailed at daylight, on our return to Masulipatam, where we arrived on the 14th. Here we found lying at anchor the 'Thalia,' a fine ship of 700 tons, bound from Calcutta to Madras, with Lord William Bentinck's stud of horses on board. The captain congratulated us on having got into Port Cornwallis when we did; for during the time

we remained there he had been lying-to in the Bay of Bengal in a tremendous gale of wind, which lasted seven days, and nearly knocked his ship to pieces. This accounts for the bad weather we have experienced.

On landing I found myself a captain; a brother officer, Captain Keith, having died during our absence, and given me a step.

'It is an ill wind that blows nobody good.'

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CONCLUSION.

Masulipatam, April.—I HAVE not written a word in my journal since last October, when we returned from our cruise. I had not the heart to do so, for it would merely have been a record of sickness, death, and burial. Our men continue to die off as rapidly as ever ; and the poor fellows who were sent to sea for the benefit of their health, although they rallied for a time, have most of them become dropsical, and few of them, I fear, will eventually recover.* I have hitherto, with God's blessing, managed to weather it, and to do my duty up to this time.

I have just received a letter from my old friend, General Sir John Dalrymple, offering me the appointment of aid-de-camp on his staff at Trichinopoly, vice his son, who has gone to join his regiment now on service in Coorg.

I feel a remorse of conscience at thus leaving my dear old comrades—probably to die—in this wretched place. It appears to me like deserting a sinking ship, and leaving the

* As I shall not have occasion to return to Masulipatam, I may as well mention here that in the month of November following, government at last came to the conclusion that Masulipatam was no longer a suitable quarter for European troops ; and the miserable remains of our regiment were ordered to embark for Moulmein. When paraded for embarkation, *fifteen men* only appeared on parade, the remainder being in hospital. Of these, twenty-eight men died during the passage across the Bay of Bengal, and thirty-five during the first month after their arrival at Moulmein ; so the poor old 62d has been pretty well used up—*as food for worms*—and for what purpose ?

remainder of the crew to perish. But it would be rather quixotic on my part to refuse so good an offer, on account of such scruples; so I have thankfully accepted it, and start in a few days for Madras, with the Colonel and his wife—both of whom have at length succumbed to this pestilential climate, and have been ordered home.*

I travelled to Madras with Colonel and Mrs. Reed, and saw them safely on board their ship—'the Barretto Junior'—which sailed on the 12th of April.

After this I remained in Madras till the end of the month, getting my staff-uniform, horse-accoutrements, etc., made up, and spending my time very pleasantly under the hospitable roof of Colonel Sewell, Sir John Dalrymple's son-in-law.

I have here an opportunity of seeing more of Madras society than I have hitherto done; and find it remarkably agreeable after twelve months of purgatory at Masulipatam, though somewhat dangerous in regard of bright eyes and pretty faces.

But having taken the precaution to have my heart case-hardened for foreign service before leaving England, I got through my Madras campaign without taking any deadly hurt from the shafts of Cupid; and on the 2d of May I started to join the General at Trichinopoly, travelling on horseback, and halting at the public bungalows.

The weather was frightfully hot, and travelling alone for a fortnight rather dull work; but as I found game of one kind or another at almost every stage, and had a few books with me, I managed to spend my time pleasantly enough, and kept myself and followers well supplied with small game, hare-soup, and venison, with an occasional pork-chop.

* The poor Colonel never recovered his health, and died shortly after his return to England.

But I am waxing prosy, and must wind up, for I have little more worth recording.

I found an aid-de-camp's life a very pleasant, though rather an idle one; for, except when employed with the General in the half-yearly inspection of troops, I had little to do beyond writing a few letters, escorting the young ladies of the family in their morning and evening rides, and flirting with all the other young ladies of the station; in which amusement, by the way, I nearly fell a victim to the bewitching hazel eyes of the charming Hester, whom, as I before mentioned, I met on the Neilgherry Hills, and who is now staying here, and a great friend of the Dalrymples.

My aid-de-camp's life was a short but a merry one. I had not held the appointment for more than seven months—three of which were spent on the Neilgherry Hills—and the lace of my staff jacket was hardly tarnished, when the General, having received tidings of his elder brother's death, by which he succeeded to a large property, decided to resign his command and return to England. I, being anxious to return with him, applied for leave of absence to do so; but this was peremptorily refused; an officer in working condition being too valuable an animal to be spared out of the wretched remains of our regiment.

The General, however, being anxious to take me with him, informed me that, being on his staff, he could *demand* my services during the voyage; but that, in the event of his doing so, I would be required, before embarking, to sign an agreement to return to India by the first opportunity; and said if I liked to run the risk of paying my passage home and out again I might do so.

I at once agreed to accept his offer, and take my chance of obtaining my two years' leave of absence on my arrival in

England*—anything better than returning to Masulipatam; so it is all settled. We have engaged berths on board the ship 'Duke of Buccleugh,' and expect to sail for England the first week in January.

The whole month of November has been devoted to a farewell inspection of the troops in the southern division. My horses have been nearly galloped off their legs; and at the very last field-day, my favourite horse 'Turquoise'—for which I had refused £120 a few days before—broke down, and is dead lame from a strain in the back sinew, from which he is not likely to recover before we embark.

It has been arranged that I am to ride the march to Madras, accompanied by old Grice, the General's orderly, in charge of his horses; the General and the ladies to start by 'dawk' a few days later.

On the 4th December I mounted my horse, and bade adieu to Trichinopoly for ever. On my way through the cantonment, I could not resist the temptation of dropping in to have a parting word with the fair Hester. Heaving a sigh that might have turned a windmill, I jumped on my horse again, rammed in the spurs, and galloped off to overtake my party; and so ended my Indian flirtations.

Having made myself acquainted with the country on my previous march to Trichinopoly, I had some good sport on my way back, and met with sundry adventures.

But we have had enough of marching. Suffice it therefore to say, that on the 16th December I reached Madras, and found the General, who had arrived the day before, in the house of his son-in-law, Colonel Sewell.

* This speculation answered. On my reporting myself at the Horse Guards, and stating my case, I obtained my two years' leave of absence without difficulty.

Next morning we moved into Government House. The Governor is at present at Calcutta ; but he has kindly offered the General the use of his house during his absence ; and has left directions with his aid-de-camp, Captain Barron, to let him have the use of his horses, carriages, etc. ; so we find ourselves in clover.

The Bishop of Calcutta, who is at present on a visit to this Presidency, is also a guest at Government House, and we find him a most agreeable inmate. He is thoroughly gentlemanlike and courteous in manner; dignified enough to act the bishop when occasion requires ; but in private society extremely affable and kind, particularly to us youngsters, and appears to enjoy a joke or piece of innocent fun as much as we do.

As our ship did not arrive from Culcutta for a fortnight after we reached Madras, we had ample time for a succession of farewell public dinners ; a grand ball, attended by the Rajah and his court ; and other gaieties, of which I was heartily tired before the time was up.

After a round of dinner-parties, to which all the big-wigs were invited, but no ladies, the gallant old bishop hinted to Captain Barron that he had seen quite enough of the gentlemen of Madras, but that he had hitherto seen nothing of the ladies, except in church, and suggested that a dinner might be given to which they should be invited. A ladies' dinner-party was accordingly arranged, and invitations issued. This proved to me a much more agreeable party than the formal 'big-wig' parties we had lately been obliged to officiate at ; but one which occasioned no small trouble to poor Barron ; for, besides the usual preparations for a grand dinner-party, he was employed a whole day turning up almanacks, army-lists, and navy-lists, to ascertain the relative rank of each lady ; and not only to make a list of them according to

seniority, but to 'tell off' a gentleman of corresponding rank to hand each lady in to dinner. To do this correctly is no easy task; for Indian ladies, who are very tenacious of their rank, have the army-list at their fingers' ends; the slightest mistake of the unfortunate aid-de-camp is therefore certain to be detected, and as certain to bring a swarm of injured fair ones about his ears, angry as a nest of hornets.

Poor Captain Barron having so much important business on hand, begged of me to assist him in making out the lists, receiving the ladies, and doing the honours of the house. This I agreed to do on condition that he allowed me to 'tell myself off' to a partner of my own choosing; so I secured the prettiest and most agreeable girl in the room, and spent a very pleasant evening.

December 28th.—Our ship, the 'Duke of Buccleugh,' arrived to-day from Calcutta. I went on board to see the General's cabins arranged, and his things securely lashed for the voyage, and learn from the captain that he will keep to his day, and sail positively on the 3d of January.

My favourite horse, 'Turquoise,' is still dead lame—the march from Trichinopoly not having improved him—so, as no one, in his present state, will offer more than 300 rupees (£30) for him, I have bequeathed him as a legacy to my brother officer, Corfield, who is to send for him.* I have ridden him now since he was a three-year-old unbroken colt; he has carried me well and safely through many a hard day's work; and I am therefore glad to leave him in the hands of one who I feel sure will prove a good master to him.

My trusty pony 'Ginger' I have sold to the bishop; and a better steed to carry a bishop never was foaled; for he is

* I was glad to learn afterwards that 'Turquoise' quite recovered from his lameness, and proved a most serviceable horse.

as strong as a little elephant, and as sober as the bishop himself; but able to go 'like a good one' when urged to do so. His attendant, 'Punch,' with his little black wife and his little black babies—for he has now two of them—of course go into the bargain; for 'the happy family' may not be divided. Poor little 'Punch,' who has now followed my fortunes for upwards of two years, shed genuine tears of sorrow at parting with me. Fortunately, he has still his pet 'Ginger' to console him. Had he been separated from him also, it would have broken his heart.

Punctual to her time, on the 3d of January, 'the Buccleugh' fired a gun, and hoisted 'blue Peter,' as a signal for all hands to repair on board. Fortunately the weather was beautifully calm, and hardly any surf on; so the ladies got on board without difficulty.

The General was received on board with a salute of fifteen guns; the anchor is weighed, the topsails sheeted home, and we are off, with a fair wind, and every stitch of canvas spread from deck to truck.—Hurrah!

So ends my Indian Journal.

NOTE.

At page 437 will be found a sketch of the only weapons,—none of them very warlike—which I found in common use among the inhabitants of the Nicobars, with the exception of the indispensable cutlass blade, which every man carries as a matter of course :—

Figure 1. Throwing spear, used for killing wild hog, and headed with iron.

Fig. 2. Fish spear, headed with hard wood.

Fig. 3. Fish spear, headed with iron.

Fig. 4. Small bow and arrow, used for shooting fish.

Fig. 5. Cross-bow, and long slender arrow, used for shooting birds.

Fig. 6. Canoe-paddle.

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